مَعَارِفِ مثنوی

MA-ĀARIF -E- MATHNAVI

A Commentary of the
Mathnavi of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.)

BY
HAZRAT MOULANA HAKIM MUHAMMAD AKHTAR SAHEB
(DAAMAT-BARAKAATUHUM)

VOLUME ONE

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A Commentary of the
Mathnavi of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.)

Hazrat Moulana Hakim
Muhammad Akhtar Saheb.(Daamat-barakaatuhum)

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Hazrat Moulana Hakim
Muhammad Akhtar Saheb.(Daamat-barakaatuhum)

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Hazrat Moulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.)

Hazrat Moulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.) is a glittering star amongst the *"Walis"* of Allah. Hazrat Moulana's heart is brimming with the LOVE of Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasool Sayyedena Muhammad ﷺ. Readers of Hazrat Moulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb's (D.B.) writings and listeners of his speeches are in reality drinking from the three fountains of knowledge and sincere LOVE for Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasool Sayyedena Muhammad ﷺ. These three great spiritual fountains are Hazrat Moulana Shah Abdul Ghani Saheb (R.A.), Hazrat Moulana Shah Muhammad Ahmed Saheb (R.A.) and Hazrat Moulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb (M.Z.) of India, in whose company Hazrat spent many years of his life and received *'khilafat'* from them.

Hazrat Moulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.) is the author of a large number of books on various subjects, but specialising in *'Tasawwuf'* and the *"Maarefat"* recognition of Allah Ta'ala. His commentary of the *'Masnawi Shareef'* of Moulana Rumi Saheb (R.A.) has been hailed by great Ulama such as Moulana Yusuf Binori Saheb (R.A.), Shaikh Zakaria Saheb (R.A.), Moulana Manzoor Nomani Saheb (R.A.) and Moulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb (D.B.) (his own Shaikh), as a commentary which ignites the love of Allah Ta'ala and which has deep effect on the hearts of the readers.

He has thousands of *'Mureeds'* (disciples) in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, America, England, Canada, South Africa, Reunion and many other parts of the world. The spiritual benefit which is derived by those who spend some time in his company, sincerely desiring reformation, is clearly evident in their transformed lifestyles. The fact that great Ulama and many Ustaads of Hadith and Tafsir, who are themselves of a high spiritual rank, became *"Bay'at"* upon his hands, is a clear indication of his esteemed rank and profound knowledge of Deen.

Hazrat Moulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb's (D.B.) visit to South Africa and many other countries of the world is spiritually most rejuvenating to both the young and the old, who flock in large numbers to hear his inspiring talks on various subjects. The basic theme of his talks has always been the development of the love of the Creator and Sustainer, Almighty Allah, in the hearts, the following of the beautiful lifestyle of Rasulullah ﷺ the fulfilment of the rights of Allah Ta'ala and His Creation and abstinence from all sins, which is a guaranteed prescription of becoming a *"Wali"* of Allah Ta'ala.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

FOREWORD

All praise is due to ALLAH TA'ALA who blessed the *"ISHA'ATUL HAQ"* with the bounty of undertaking the translation and publication of the *"MA'AARIF- E - MATHNAVI"* of Hazrat Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.).

Innumerable Durood and Salaams upon our beloved Nabi Sayyedena Muhammad ﷺ from whose ocean of knowledge and light the Ulama of the Ummat inherit; to thereby guide mankind till the day of Qiyamah.

The *"MA'AARIF-E-MATHNAVI."* is a commentary of a selection of chapters from the famous masterpiece of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.) , entitled *"MATHNAVI-E-RUM"*, which is composed of some 28 000 verses of poetry - the commentry of which was undertaken by Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.).

Letters and comments from great luminaries and scholars of Islam (included here-in-after) and in addition, the appreciation and recommendation by such personages of Muhadditheen, Mufassireen and Ulama, clearly indicate the distinction of the author and the esteem in which he is held.

In this day and age when materialistic prosperity is the principal aspiration, and which unfortunately surpasses Religion in terms of chief priority, life revolves entirely around carnal and sensual pleasures - thus the purpose of life itself has been forgotten and the gift of life wasted.

The beautiful characteristic traits pertaining to human excellence which includes shame, modesty, honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, generosity, kindness etc., of which good character is moulded, is presently at its lowest ebb.

Hearts have become veiled in darkness and permeated with evil desires and passions - filled with malice, greed, pride, envy, jealousy etc. In satisfying these cravings of the animal self, both the heart and the soul are foolishly exchanged for that which is ephemeral and perishable.

The translation of the *"MA'AARIF-E-MATHNAVI"* into the English language and its publication in such desperate times is indeed a great boon for the Ummah. The translation was ably rendered by Moulana Yusuf Karan of Cape Town.

A study of the contents of the book with an open mind and with a sincere intention of following through with the advises and teachings of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.), as well as that of the author of the commentary, Arif Billah Hazrat Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb, would be most instrumental in transforming the sensual and worldly love, to the pure, pristine, selfless and healthy love of ALLAH TA'ALA, and His beloved Prophet, Sayyedena Muhammad ﷺ. It is in reality the prescription and the panacea for the maladies and ills predominant in the society

It will rekindle the flickering flame of Imaan into a sound faith in ALLAH TA'ALA, His Exalted Status, His Power over all things, His Compassion, His Mercy and His Kindness. Likewise it would strengthen the Imaan in His Wrath and Anger over those who are persistent and heedless of their indulgence in sins, with no thought of sincere repentance. In essence, to rebuild that intimate, sincere and lasting relationship with ALLAH TA'ALA, which is a foundation for true success in both the worlds, this book is indeed a great gift.

Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi's (R.A.) life and works have been covered in this volume by the author and it would not be out of place to mention that the "MATHNAVI" of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) has inspired and illuminated the hearts of millions of people since it was written and has been extensively quoted by our pious Ulama and Auliya.

May ALLAH TA'ALA reward all brothers and sisters abundantly both in this world and in the hereafter, for their voluntary assistance rendered solely for His Pleasure.

(MOULANA) YUNUS PATEL
(NAAZIM) ISHA'ATUL HAQ
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

22 ZIL HIJJAH 1417
30 APRIL 1997

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

MA-AARIF-E-MATHNAVI

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

From Shaikul Hadith Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhelwi Saheb (R.A.)

Respected Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (Damat-Barakatukum),

Salaam Masnoon

I acknowledge receipt of your two books Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi and Dunya-ki-Haqeeqat which was a source of great pleasure to me. It gives me great pleasure in that your spiritual connection was initially with Moulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri (R.A.) and presently with Moulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb (M.Z.). May Allah Taala bless you abundantly from the spirituality of both of them. May Allah also grant you great rewards in both the worlds, for this most valuable and magnanimous gift to me.

I had the opportunity of listening to a reading of both the books and found the contents excellent, having great effect upon the heart. May Allah accept your efforts and make both the books a continuous act of charity for you. May Allah also enable the publication of 'Ma-aarif-e-Shamsh Tabrez' in the near future and may the readers enjoy the fruits of it.

I pray that Allah accept all your writings and make it a treasure of good deeds for you in the hereafter and may He enable you to return to Him with a good ending.

(Hazrat Sheikul Hadith) Muhammad Zakariyya (R.A.)
Madina Tayyibah

* * *

From Moulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb (D.B.) - The Khaleefa of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy Saheb (R.A.)

Respected Janab Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B),

As-Salaamo Alaikum-Wa-Rahmatullah

I had the opportunity of perusing the various parts of Ma-aarif-e- Mathnavi and was greatly pleased. Masha Allah, you have given an excellent commentary of the Mathnavi Shareef. On certain days I read from it, after the Asar salaat to the congregation. It also gives me great pleasure that many of our learned elders have expressed much liking for it. Some of them are also desirous of having it published here in India.

Moulana Manzoor Nomani Saheb (D.B.), had seen a copy of Ma-aarif-e Mathnavi at the residence of Janab Muhammad Anwar Saheb in Jeddah. When I met him in Bombay, he informed me that the Ma-aarif-e- Mathnavi is a wonderful and a very beneficial book. He also strongly recommended that it should be published here in India. May Allah accept it and enable people to reap great benefits from it.

Was-Salaam.

(Hazrat Moulana) Abrarul Haq (M.Z.)
Nazim of Madrassa Ashraful Madaaris and Majlis Da'watul Haq
Hardoi, UP, India

* * *

From Hazrat Moulana Mufti Mohammed Shafee Saheb (R.A.) Mufti Azam of Pakistan and Chief Professor of Darul Uloom, Karachi

Due to my long illness and my extreme weakness I am unable to read books or to write any opinions on them. But from the parts of Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb's (D.B.) Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi, which he read out to me and from the couple of pages which I was able to look at, I have come to the conclusion that this is a great service to Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) Mathnavi, through which it has been made easy for people to acquire benefit. May Allah in His Infinite Mercy accept it and make it beneficial for the Muslims. And *"He is the Helper on whom is our reliance."*

(Hazrat Moulana Mufti) Mohammed Shafee (R.A.)

Darul Uloom, Karachi, 23 Ramadaan 1396.

* * *

From Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Yusuf Binori Saheb (R.A.) Madrassa Arabia Islamia - Newtown, Karachi

On perusing through the graceful work of Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb's (D.B.), Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi, I developed such deep hearted respect and love for the Moulana which I had never imagined possible. It is a beautiful mixture of his ability to compose Persian and Urdu poetry, his pure taste, beautiful thoughts and heartfelt pains of Allah's Love. In giving an explanation of the chosen verses of Divaan-e-Shamsh Tabrez (R.A.), who is the spiritual mentor of Moulana Rumi (R.A.), the author has produced a clear sign of his sensitive taste and clear thoughts. May Allah grant those with the right taste the opportunity of gaining great benefit from it. Ameen.

(Hazrat Moulana) Muhammad Yusuf Binori (R.A.)
Tuesday, 8 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1396.

* * *

From Moulana Muhammad Ashiq Ilahi Bulandshari Saheb (D.B.) Professor of Hadith, Darul Uloom, Karachi

The Mathnavi of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) is a very bulky work. It is not easy for everyone to derive benefit from it, especially in these days when very few people know the Persian language. The standard of Persian required is extremely high in order to understand the Mathnavi properly.

Moreover, the understanding of a specific book is not entirely dependent upon knowing the language alone. Understanding it properly has much to do with the heart and the soul. Moulana Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.) is a Sheikh of the Chishtiya order, a Khalifa of the order of Moulana Thanwy (R.A.), and as such has a special connection with understanding the Mathnavi. The meanings of the Mathnavi are inscribed upon his heart. He has spent many long and arduous hours in explaining in simple Urdu this collection of Mathnavi verses and writings. This is not merely an exposition of the Mathnavi. It is a path laid for those treading the way of the Sufi. As Allah says: *"And through the stars they are guided"*.

May Allah accept these valiant efforts of Moulana Akhtar Saheb (D.B.) and may He make this Book a light for those treading on the path of Tariqat, *"And that is indeed easy for Him"*

Muhammad Ashiq Ilahi Bulandshari (D.B.)
20 Jamad-al-Ula 1393

From Moulana Mufti Walee Hasen Tonki Saheb (R.A.) Madrassa Arabia Islamia - Newtown, Karachi

The Mathnavi by Moulana Rumi (R.A.) is a unique book. In actual fact it is a book on the principles of Deen wherein instead of masails on Ilmul Kalaam being solved through proofs, they are proven through ecstatic experience and preaching. Through it hundreds of thousands have become endowed with the light of Imaan and the true light of humanity. Their doubts have disappeared. Not only have their doubts vanished, but they also have acquired the ecstasy of Divine love. It is a milestone on the road towards reformation and reparation. Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi is now before you in a special order of chosen references written in simple Urdu by Hazrat Muhammad Hakeem Akhtar Saheb (D.B). I had the opportunity of looking through some parts of the book. The explanation is in simple Urdu, which will prove to be of great benefit. May Allah reward the writer thereof and increase his ranks and enable people to derive great benefit from it.

Walee Hasen Tonki (R.A.)
Teacher, Madrassa Arabia Islamia, Karachi 5
15 Jamad-as-Thaani 1393

* * *

From Hazrat Dr Muhammad Abdul Hay (BA; LLB; MS) (R.A.) The Khaleefa of Hakeemul Ummat Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.)

The Respected Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.) read to me his Urdu commentary of some verses from the Mathnavi. I found the verses to be filled with various inspired topics of tasawwuf. The true effect of these verses can only be felt by reading them. The author has also made part of his book, Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi, his own composition of Mathnavi and named it Mathnivi-e-Akhtar.*

In Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi, the author divided Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) Mathnavi into various topics, each one being a subject in itself and in this manner he aptly connected the stories narrated with each other. In this way the Mathnavi of Moulana Rumi (R.A.)has been arranged in a wonderful manner which is filled with ecstasy and benefit for those with interest. May Allah reward the author for this service and grant that people may acquire benefit from it. Ameen.

Muhammad Abdul Hay (R.A.)
24 Ramadaan 1392 (1st November 1976)

* * *

N.B.*. Not part of this translation

From Moulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Ludhianwy Saheb (D.B.) Rector of Ashraful Madaaris, Nazimabad, Karachi

Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.) has at various times during the preparation of his writings, Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi and Mathnavi-e-Akhtar, recited some sections of his work which created ecstasy and great pleasure in the heart. In actual fact, these writings are the spiritual blessings of Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.). Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.) was an embodiment and personal exposition of Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) Mathnavi. If he chose Moulana Akhtar´(D.B.) as his spokesman, one can only imagine how much duas he must have made for Moulana Akhtar's (D.B.) writings and speeches. May Allah grant acceptance and make it beneficial. Ameen.

Rasheed Ahmad (D.B.)
20 Shawaal 1392

* * *

Hazrat Moulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmaani Thanwy Saheb (D.B.) Shaikul Hadith, Darul Uloom Islamia, Tandolayaar

I had the opportunity to peruse through some parts of the Urdu translation of Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) Mathnavi by Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.). Masha Allah, it is an excellent presentation.

May Allah Taala accept the services rendered by Moulana Akhtar (D.B.) and enable it to be beneficial to the Muslims.

Wassallam
Zafar Ahmad Uthmani (D.B.)
4 Zul Qa'dah 1392

* * *

From Hazrat Moulana Muhamadullah Saheb (R.A.) of Dacca, Khaleefa of Hakeemul Ummat Hazrat Moulana Ashra'f Ali Thanwy (R.A.)

I have been given the opportunity of perusing through Mathnavi-e-Akhtar which consists of various verses of poetry expounding various topics of tasawwuf. I have personally derived great benefit from it. From the expositions of love and the shining lights of Ma'rifat, which I perceived in them, I was indeed able to imagine the amount of spiritual lights that must, of necessity, be experienced in his explanations of the Maarif-e-Mathnavi. I have the hope that all seekers of Allah will derive great benefit from this book. I pray that Allah grant the author great spiritual advancement and also grant His servants the blessings of the author's companionship, his speech and his writings.

Muhammadullah Dhakawy (R.A.)
Haram Shareef, Mecca
26 Zil Qadah 1392

* * *

From Hazrat Moulana Muhammad At-har Ali Saheb (R.A.) Khaleefa of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.)

Respected Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.)

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wabarakaatuh

On perusing through the copy of Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi, I found a great liking for it. Besides this liking, I also found it filled with treatment for evil propensities and the means of attaining virtues for the soul. May Allah enable it to become beneficial both for myself and for the entire Ummat. I beg of you to pray on my behalf that Allah grant me a good ending and the ability to work righteously and to be obedient to His Will. Ameen.

Muhammad At-har Ali (R.A.), Dacca

* * *

From Moulana Muhammad Abdullah Saheb (D.B.)
Mufti, Khayrul-Madaaris, Multan

I was very much pleased to have read Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi. In it the teachings of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) have been expounded in such a beautiful manner and in such an easy language that all can understand it. This is the great achievement of Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (D.B.). In this materialistic world, this spiritual gift is indeed a worthy and a necessary present. This book should be given prominence in all libraries and included in all Urdu Curricula and Deeni Madrassas as well. In it the flowers from the garden of Moulana Phulpuri (R.A.) has been arranged in an orderly manner.

There is one couplet from Moulana Akhtar's (D.B.) Mathnavi, which is quoted at the end of the book, which has affected my heart:

"Leave out the Kingdom, Go for the Master of the Kingdoms
So that Oh! You poor one, You may own thousands of Kingdoms"

This couplet has a great lesson for us in this world. Instead of wasting time reading useless literature forms, a study of this book will indeed bring peace to the heart. The other works of Moulana Akhtar (D.B.) viz. *"Ma'rifat Ilahiyya"*, *"Ma-iyyat Ilahiyya"* have also been well accepted by all the men of knowledge. This book by Moulana Akhtar (D.B.) will be a treasure for the men of knowledge, for the men of letters and for the men of tasawwuf.

Muhammad Abdullah (D.B.)

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

INTRODUCTION

I had great love, admiration and connection with Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.) and his Mathnavi, before I even reached the age of maturity. Later Allah blessed me with such a Sheikh who also happened to be a great lover of the Mathnavi. He would say: *"The Mathnavi is filled with burning love and lights the fire of love in the hearts of those who read it."*

This Sheikh, Moulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri (R.A.) would teach the Mathnavi daily to his class after Asar Salaah, and he would present it in such a manner that it would create a vibration in the heart's of the listeners.

I have acquired much spiritual blessings from the Mathnavi and even in my other books like Marifat-e-Ilahiyya, etc. the blessings of the Mathnavi are most glaring. Whenever I quoted some lines from the Mathnavi to Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.) and explained the meaning thereof in his presence, which I had been inspired with, he used to become very happy and tearful on hearing my expositions. One day, a strange condition came over me. I was sitting in his presence after Fajar Salaah and, having sought his permission, began expounding a commentary on some Mathnavi verses. Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.) listened with great attention until eleven o' clock i.e. for 5 solid hours he listened to my commentary. During the reading a strange emotional state overtook us, so much so that both Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.) and I wept.

"The eye of the beloved too is in tears today
O! extreme sigh, now what is your view"

Due to my heart-felt connections and love for the Mathnavi, it had always been my wish, that Allah should enable me to pen down the knowledge and wisdom contained in the Mathnavi in such a manner, that the love for Allah and the longing for Him would also be created in the hearts of the readers.

My duty will be to explain the love of Allah to all and sundry and thereafter whosoever has been chosen for it, and who is found befitting and suitable to receive this Divine Love, will become influenced towards it and it will become a *"Sadaqah Jariyah"* (act of recurring reward) for me.

"Having fallen madly in love, We will make all mankind mad
From the mimbar We will invite all towards Thy love."

All praise be to Allah. It is through the great bounty, blessings and Duahs of both Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.) and Hazrat Abraarul Haq Saheb (M.Z.) that the preparation of Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi has been completed and has become an invitation towards love for Allah. All Praise is due to Allah for that.

Further, in the editing and revising of the manuscript of Ma-aarif-e-Mathnavi, Moulana Sayed Muhammad Ishrat Jameel (R.A.) did an excellent piece of work. Hence I request the reader to make duah for me, for Moulana Jameel, our parents, our Ustads, our Sheikhs, our loved ones and all those who assisted us, that Allah pardon us all and that He accept this book as a means to our salvation.

وَ مَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ

"And that is not difficult for Allah-Taala"

Lastly, through Allah's Grace, the author's book Bahr Mathnavi* which consists of couplets on the scale and rhyme of Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) Mathnavi, has also become quite popular. It is printed at the back of this volume under the name Mathnavi-e-Akhtar. Our elders have shown a keen liking for these lines of

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N.B.*. Not part of this translation

poetry as can be seen from the comments made by them . May Allah through His Grace and through the Sadaqah of His Beloved Muhammad ﷺ accept this endeavour and enable this book to become a beneficial gift to the Muslim Ummat and may He make it a Sadaqah Jariya on my behalf.

(Moulana) Muhammad Akhtar (M.Z.)
Khaanqah Imdadiyya, Ashrafiya,
Gulshan Iqbal, Karachi, Pakistan

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF MOULANA RUMI (R.A.)

Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) name was Muhammad and his title was Jalaluddin but generally he became known as Moulana Rumi (R.A.). He was born in the town of Balkh in 604 A.H. and belonged to the family of Hazrat Abu Bakr ؓ. His father's name was Bahauddin bin Hussain Balkhy. Muhammad Khwarizm Shah Balkhy (d 617) was his maternal grandfather. In 610 A.H. Moulana's father, Bahauddin, left Balkh and settled in Nayshapur. On arrival at Nayshapur, his father took him to the famous saint, Khwaja Fariduddin Attar (R.A.) Moulana Rumi (R.A.) was then 6 years old. Khwaja Fariduddin (R.A.) gave them a copy of his Mathnavi as a present and said to his father, *"Do not be negligent of this able one. He will one day make his voice heard."*

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) acquired his initial instructions from his father. The father chose his most foremost student and Mureed to be a teacher and mentor to the young boy and in this manner Moulana Rumi (R.A.) studied most of the branches of knowledge under this student, Moulana Burhanuddin (R.A.). At the age of 18 years, Moulana Rumi (R.A.) got married and in that same year he went with his father to settle in Qunya.

When Moulana Rumi (R.A.) was 25 years old, his father passed away. Moulana then went to Syria for the sole purpose of completing his studies. For some time, Moulana stayed at the

Madrassa Jaladiya in Halb (Alepo) where he also sought the spiritual guidance and blessings of Kamaluddin bin Adeem (R.A.). Therafter for 7 years he went to study in Damascus. At Damascus, Moulana Rumi (R.A.) studied all the Mazaahib, Ilmul Kalaam, Fiqah and acquired a good knowledge of all the differences of opinions in deeni matters. He was also highly qualified in philosophy and tasawwuf. After the death of his father, Sayed Burhanuddin (R.A.) was also his mentor on the path of tariqat for 9 years. Thereafter he spent the rest of his life in teaching and lecturing.

SECOND PHASE OF MOULANA RUMI'S (R.A.) LIFE

A complete transformation came over Moulana's life from the moment he came into contact with Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.). Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) was from a pious family which belonged to the Ismaili sect. He left his family sectarian connections, acquired knowledge and became a mureed of Baba Kamaluddin Jundy (R.A.). In the company of the merchants he used to travel around from place to place.

Once he made a duah: *"O Allah, grant me the companionship of such a companion who will be able to bear my company"*. In reply to this duah the good news was given to him: *"Go to Rum"*. He immediately set forth and soon reached Qunya where he arrived at a place of brass goods sellers. There was a platform whereupon the leaders always used to sit. It was at this place that the meeting between Moulana Rumi (R.A.) and Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) took place and from where their friendship and companionship commenced. From that day onwards, a complete change came over Moulana Rumi (R.A.) and the fire of Divine love was kindled in his heart.

He avoided *'Simu'*, the listening to musical renderings. He also left teaching, lecturing and preaching. But he did not leave the company of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) even for a little while.

However, a great commotion took place in the town with the result that Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) secretly left for Damascus. This caused Moulana tremendous sadness. After some time, some people noticing Moulana's discomfort and uneasiness, went to call Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) back. But after staying for a short while, he again disappeared to an unknown destination. Although they searched for him, he could not be found. Some historians are of the opinion that he had been martyred. After the disappearance of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.), Moulana Rumi (R.A.) suffered tremendous uneasiness, restlessness and loneliness. It was during this troubled period that he once happened to pass by the shop of Salahuddin Zarkoob who was busy beating metal into thin leaves. At that moment a strange condition came over Moulana. Salahuddin did not stop beating the leaves and thus many leaves were lost. Finally Salahuddin allowed the shop to become squandered away and he joined the company of Moulana Rumi (R.A.). In this manner he spent 9 years with Moulana. Through this companionship Moulana was greatly consoled.

In 664 A.H. Salahuddin passed away and after his death Moulana chose Husamuddin Chulpi (R.A.) from among his mureeds to be his companion for as long as he lived. Thereafter, Moulana consoled his heart through this new companionship. Moulana used to respect and honour Husamuddin (R.A.) to such an extent that people were under the impression that he was Moulana's spiritual guide. It was through the encouragement of Moulana Husamuddin (R.A.) that Moulana Rumi (R.A.) wrote the famous Mathnavi Shareef.

MOULANA RUMI'S (R.A.) SICKNESS AND DEATH

In 672 A.H. a strong earthquake shook Qunya and for 40 days thereafter the vibrations were experienced. Moulana used to say that the earth was hungry and wanted a morsel. A few days thereafter Moulana became ill. Some very good physicians were called to treat him but to no avail and without success. On Sunday, the 5th Jamad-as-Thani 672, at the time of sunset, Moulana passed away.

The Janaza left the next morning. Everybody from the King to the poorest soul accompanied the Janaza. People were so emotional that they even broke the coffin in which the body was being transported for the sake of barakat. The Janaza reached the graveyard by the evening. Sheikh Sadruddin (R.A.), a mureed of Sheikh Akbar Muhyuddin (R.A.) together with his mureeds also followed the Janaza. He was appointed to lead the funeral prayer but as he stood ready to do so, he uttered a cry and fell unconscious. Thereafter, Qadi Sirajuddin (R.A.) lead the funeral prayers.

In accordance with the wasiyat of Moulana Rumi (R.A.), Hazrat Husamuddin (R.A.) became the Khalifa after him. Moulana left 2 sons; Ala-uddeen Muhammad and Sultan Wala. In 684 A.H., Hazrat Husamuddin (R.A.) also passed away and the next appointed Khalifa was Sultan Wala.

MOULANA'S WRITINGS

Among Moulana's writings is a compilation of his sayings under the title: *"Feehi maa feehi"*. Then there is an anthology of 50 000 couplets which many people mistakenly consider to be the work of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.)

The third writing is the *'Mathnavi'* through which Moulana is kept alive today in the world. It seems proper at this stage to just mention shortly some of the special features of this most famous work so as to have an insight into it.

SPECIALITIES OF THE MATHNAVI

Towards the end of the Ghaznawi Empire Hakeem Sinai (R.A.) wrote a book, *"Hadeqah"* which was the first book written on tasawwuf in a poetic form. After that Hazrat Fariduddin Attar (R.A.) wrote many Mathnavis among which the most famous one was *"Mantiquttayr"*. One day while Moulana Rumi (R.A.) was in a special state of ecstasy, he involuntarily uttered the first lines from the Mathnavi. Husamuddin Chalpi (R.A.) heard it and insisted that Moulana should continue with it and complete the Mathnavi. The result was that six volumes were written. During the period of writing there were many lapses of time. Hence we find quite a few couplets which were written wherein Husamuddin Chalpi (R.A.) was the cause for it being written. In some volumes Moulana had given a very good reason for the delay in writing, as for example:

"For quite some time, this Mathnavi has been delayed
It takes time for blood to become milk.
Until you are not blessed with another baby
The blood (in the body of the mother) would not transform into sweet milk."

The Mathnavi was commenced in 662 A.H.

WRITING STYLE

When writing on academic and ethical matters, one way of writing is to discuss one specific mas-ala (rulings of Shariah) separate from the others and at the same time to mention similar topics under one heading and division. Another manner is to write a certain story and thereafter deduce from it various *"ilmi masalas"* and provide explanation thereof. In this second manner the benefit derived is that the topic under discussion settles in the mind, which does not become tired thereof. This is the style which Moulana has adopted in the writing of the Mathnavi.

Moulana himself says:

"O Brother this story is like a shell
And the meaning in it is like a seed (in the shell)".

A grammarian said *"Indeed Zayd hit Amr"* (this was to show the nominative case of '*Zaidun*' and the accusative case of '*Amran*'

The student (looking at the outer meaning) objected *"Why did Zayd hit Amr without cause?"*

The Teacher said *"This sentence is only a container for the meaning,*
Just retain the grain and discard the shell.
The tale (sentence) of Zayd and Amr is constructed for explaining the case ending
(of the subject and the object),
If this tale is untrue, you should (rather) worry about the case ending."

Of all the books written in Persian on this topic (tasawwuf and ethics), in no other book are such delicate and intricately sensitive issues mentioned. These issues abound in the Mathnavi. The Mathnavi is not only a book on tasawwuf and ethics, it also deals with dogma and metaphysics. Whether it deals with masail on tasawwuf or on matters of dogma, these are explained by way of examples, similes and metaphors in such a manner that no ground is left for rejection. The most complicated masail are clarified in such a manner that they become easy to understand. Not a single *"masala"* of the important points pertaining to tasawwuf and to ilmul Kalaam have been ignored.

The Mathnavi has been composed in *'Ramal'* (a poetical method) that is hexagon curtailed. Its singular scale and beat is *"Fa'ilatun, Fa'ilatun Fa'ilun"* twice

In this Mathnavi, there is a musical nature in the words and letters used, a uniqueness in the expression and clarity in its measure. Apart from that, the spiritual blessings, and the effect and the ecstatic feelings experienced in reading it, is quite overwhelming.

SUMMARY OF THE LIFE OF JALALUDDIN RUMI (R.A.)

The author Muhammad Jalaluddin known as Moulana Rumi (R.A.), was born at Balkh in the year 604 A.H. and was the son of Sheikh Bahauddin bin Hussain Balkhi (R.A.). He was the grandchild of Muhammad Khwarizm Shah (R.A.). At the age of 6 he departed from Balkh with his father and at the age of 18 he got married at a place known as Larnad. In that same year he settled in Qunya and at the age of 25, he went to Syria for the purpose of furthering his education.

In 642 A.H. he became a mureed of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) in Qunya. In 662 A.H. he commenced the writing of the Mathnavi. On Sunday, the 5 Jamad-as-Thani, 672 A.H. at the time of sunset he passed away. He was buried in Qunya at the age of 68 years. He left behind 2 sons, Ala-uddin Muhammad and Sultan Wala.

THAT THE MATHNAVI WAS AN INSPIRATION IS ALLUDED TO BY A VERSE OF MOULANA RUMI (R.A.)

That the Mathnavi Sharif is an inspired version is hinted at in the following verse (which is the last verse of Mathnavi):

"When the sun went down through the horizon of the heart,
It (the Mathnavi) ended, and only Allah knows best about the truth
(of the matter)."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that the channel through which the celestial hidden knowledges had been coming through, that spiritual sun has now through the infinite wisdom of Allah, disappeared below the horizon of the heart. In other words, manifestation changed to the state of concealment as is either way experienced by the saintly ones who have recognised Allah Taala. In fact the state of concealment has some additional advantages.

So when the sun of inspiration, across the heart's outlet, set below the horizon, this book came to an end.

And Allah alone knows best what particular wisdom can be in a particular affair at a given time. And since Allah alone knows the wisdom and He acts accordingly, obviously, the wisdom lies in that which He did, and therefore I would not pretend talking any further, instead, terminate the Mathnavi here.

Hazrat Hakim -al -Ummat Thanawi (R.A.) has at this juncture written an important note, that the friend of Allah should always talk as the occasion and the time demands, i.e. when he is in the right mood, the audience is attentive and the flow of the heavenly cognisance is natural with moderation, neither forcing himself nor being overpowered by emotions. With this state of mind one should engage himself in benefiting the people there and then. Hazrat Thanwi (R.A.) was inspired by the following verse:

> *"When (your beloved master) orders you to speak, then speak and (speak) with fervour."*

And if He says: *"No!, then do not speak and observe (total) silence."*

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) had foretold that after him shall come a *'Light of Soul'* who would complete this Mathnavi (i.e. its sixth unfinished part, 'Daftah') which has been mentioned in the following verses:

> *"The commentary on this (story) remains unfinished, but the innermost has been closed and nothing more is coming forth (now).*
>
> *The remainder of this story is going to be said, speechlessly, unto the heart of someone who would possess soul-sight."*

Accordingly, that man of 'sighted-soul' became Moulana Mufti Ilahi Baksh Kandelhawi (R.A.) by the grace of Allah Ta'ala and it was he who witnessed on his (blessed) soul the inspirations of the soul of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.) and was subsequently able to complete the Mathnavi; as Moulana Mufti Kandelhawi (R.A.) says:

> *"Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.), through your illuminations you have dominated my soul in such a manner that I lost my very existence. As if you were a lion of the Almighty Allah who has annihilated my very being."*

Mufti Saheb is trying to say that in accordance with Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) foretelling of the completion of the sixth part of Mathnavi, Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) holy soul is busy inspiring my soul with Divine Guidance, therefore the pronouncements of my tongue, would actually be the Kalaam (speech) of Moulana Rumi (R.A.). Like a poet has said:

> *"Although the Holy Quran has come through the (Mubarak) lip of the Messenger ﷺ*
> *Whosoever says, it is not the word of Allah is a disbeliever."*

Mufti Ilahi Baksh (R.A.) is the man of the 12th century while Moulana Rumi (R.A.) lived in the 7th century (of the Islamic calendar). Mufti Ilahi Baksh (R.A.) had completed his Islamic Studies (Shariah) under Shah Abd-al-Aziz Delhawi (R.A.)

> *"Congratulations! O my desperate sigh!*
> *You are bringing the destination (union of Allah Ta'alah) closer and closer."*

THE MEETING OF MOULANA RUMI (R.A.) AND HAZRAT SHAMSH TABREZI (R.A.)

In the words of (Moulana) Hakeem Akhtar (Saheb):

Listen dear friends to the story of Moulana Rumi
Who was generally involved with teaching.
While being unaware of the ways of the path (Sulook).
Being involved with external knowledge at all times,
His lecturing pursuits had become famous all around,
While for him hard was the contact with the path.
For arrogance through knowledge keeps the men of knowledge
Far away from recognising the truth.

For the main object of all knowledge is to attain Divine Love
Apart from that all is mere conceit.
But him on whom Allah's Grace shines,
One day or another he will become Allah's favourite.
In this way Allah's Grace shone on Moulana Rumi
And from the unseen, Allah's help reached him.
All achievements come about through Divine Grace
And without His favour nothing comes about.
From the unseen world Rumi was chosen.
As Shamsh Tabrezi prayed to the Lord:
"Lord, this fire of love burning in my heart,
This restless longing which lies in me,
This fire of truth which is buried in my heart
And all that was granted to me.
O Lord, let there be such a bondsman of Thine
Who in true fashion will be suitable to inherit.
That his heart may become filled with truth
And that I may fill his being with pearls of wisdom.
Let me find such an heir who will be able
To bear the burden of the fire of love in him.
For the burning love within myself
Is like the Mount Toor of love in the heart.
Lord, near indeed is for me the time of parting
To whom shall I leave this trust? O, Beloved."
From the unseen came the immediate reply:
"O Shamsh Tabrezi, hasten towards Rum.
Go and make Moulana Rumi the Master of Rum.
Let him become unoccupied with the affairs of Rum."
Thus at the command of the unseen Shamsh proceeded
Towards Rum as commanded from on High.
As he cast his sight upon Moulana Rumi,
Unconscious he fell down on the path.
Forgotten were the robes of knowledge.
Hungry and thirsty was he to be successful on the path.

At one time Moulana Rumi was known
As a man of dignity and splendour.
The one endowed with the special connections of Khwarizm Shah
And also endowed with being a Master of knowledge.
Whenever he had to go anywhere,
Speedily was brought for him the royal sedan
And ready for him were soldiers, servants and students
Who in honour and respect accompanied him.
He was used to having his hands and feet kissed
And on all sides he used to be crowded.
Today he fell down unconscious.
Through Divine Love he discarded all signs of pomp and splendour.
What a glance was thrown on him by Shamsh Tabrezi
And through that he became a leader of the Path.
When the Pir of Rum regained consciousness,
He followed the footsteps of Shamsh Tabrezi
Taking his Sheikh's bedding on his head as he walked
Having bought the humility of Love.
When does Divine Love keep a transitory world,
All that became lost in the dust.
For the honour of Divine Love is everlasting honour
And its ecstasy is ecstasy forever.
And upon Jalaluddin Rumi there was
The full effect of the influence of Shamsh Tabrezi
And Shamsh Tabrezi filled the heart of Rumi
With burning love and yaqeen.
From the hands of the Sheikh whatever bounty he found
The Mathnavi is filled with gratitude for that.
Look from what to what Shamsh transformed Rumi,
Through their liaison and company wonders resulted.
It is through the spiritual bounty of Shamsh
That without fear Rumi could dance around with turban tied.
Such an effect was had on the Pir Rumi
As he explains in Mathnavi without any fear.

That Shamsh Tabrezi was a light complete.
He was the sun and he was the lights of truth.
In the Mathnavi, the fire of Tabrez burns.
The meanings are Tabrezi, the words Rumi's.
What did Rumi acquire from the hands of Tabrezi (R.A.)?
Ask this of Rumi himself.
But I say, O my friends,
Search for it yourself in the Mathnavi.

AKHTAR'S THOUGHTS

One day my ship will also cast (its) anchor
One day we will passionately see Makkah and Madinah.
Although the mine of love is in every heart,
However it cannot be discovered without blood and sweat.
Good God! These blossoming springs of ebullition of love,
My bosom feels like a river of fire.
O tears of repentance! May I be sacrificed over your favours,
This treasure of mercy has rained upon a sinner.
The condition (of success) is (some) kind attention of the men of love,
Otherwise this gem of love cannot be had.
Akhtar! I do agree, that there are calamities in the path of love,
But through His grace, Sakinah and Tranquillity descends as well.

PART ONE

1

THIS BOOK OF DEEP HEARTED PAIN, O FRIENDS
I HAVE WRITTEN SOLELY FOR THE (TRUE) LOVERS

2

ON EVERY PAGE I HAVE SHED THE BLOOD OF MY HEART
ON EVERY PAGE I HAVE CRIED OF MY HEARTACHE
(IN THE LOVE OF ALLAH TAALA)

3

I HAVE REMOVED THE VEIL FROM A HIDDEN ACHE,
THEREBY INCREASING THE PAIN IN THE HEARTS OF
LOVERS (OF ALLAH)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

THE STORY OF JAAFAR AL-TAYYAR رضی اللہ عنہ

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) states: *"It is a well known fact that the fox is noted for its cowardice."* However, the fox which has a lion as a support behind its back saying to him: *"Fear not, my hand is upon your back"*, in spite of lacking courage, becomes very brave indeed. His new found bravery is of such a nature that he will not hesitate to attack a leopard. He now has the support of a lion at his side, he will show no fear for a leopard.

Similarly is the case of the chosen servants of Allah. In spite of their apparent weakness and distressed position, they show no fear in the face of a multitude of evil forces. These saintly ones do experience some natural fear, of physical hurt or injury but at heart they have no fear of anyone besides Allah.

A Sufi says:

"O people look not upon my weakly countenance for I have legs of iron.

Do you know that within my heart I am connected to the king of Kings."

In this regard Moulana Rumi (R.A.) tells a story of Hazrat Jaafar رضی اللہ عنہ Once Hazrat Jaafar رضی اللہ عنہ attacked a fortress, all by himself. His attack was so fierce that it seemed that the fortress would soon become a prey to the hoofs of his horse. The inmates of the fortress were so struck by awe that they closed the gates of the fortress and no-one dared to come out to engage him in battle.

The King discussed with his Wazir as to what line of action is to be adopted. The Wazir advised him:

"The best line of action is to cancel all plans of making war against the man. It is best to take your Kafan and your sword and meet him and then to throw down your weapon".

The King replied: *"But this man is all by himself. How is it that you give me such advise?"*

The Wazir informed him: *"Do not underestimate his being one man only. Open your eyes and look at the fortress and see how it trembles like quick silver. Look at the inmates of the fortress, and see how their heads are bent downwards like sheep. Even though the man is alone, the heart which he has in his breast is not like the hearts of ordinary men. Look at his brave courage, that in the face of a vast multitude of opponents, he challenges them into battle with a naked sword in his hand and in a confident and victorious manner, calls them to fight. It seems that all the battle forces of the East and West are with him. One man alone, but he appears like hundreds of thousands. Do you not see that whichever soldiers are sent out to fight him are soon seen lying under the hoofs of his horse? When I had seen the great individuality of this man, O King, I realised that this multitude of soldiers which are with you, will not be able to do anything against him. Do not rely upon numbers. The main thing is the unity of the* *heart and this is actually what is so striking about the heart of this man. In this respect he has been endowed endlessly with it. This is a gift from Allah, which is attained through the acquisition of contact with Him and through rigorous spiritual exercises. This connection you will not be able to attain while you are in the state of Kufr. Hence, it is best for you to throw down your weapons in defeat before the courageous believer and to open the gates of the fortress, because your large number of soldiers are of no use."*

Then Moulana Rumi (R.A.) gave examples of where in the face of a minority, the majority becomes useless:

EXAMPLE ONE

Millions of stars are shining and produce light, but at the rising of the sun, their light becomes non-existent.

EXAMPLE TWO

If one thousand mice should attack a weak and sickly cat, it would appear that they would be victorious in their endeavour. A few of them can grab him by the neck. One or two of them can then take his eyes out. One or two of them can tear off his ears with their teeth. One or two of them can make an opening at his side, enter and begin chewing the internal organs.

That would appear to be reasonable to accept. However, experience has shown otherwise. As soon as the weak and sickly cat utters one *"miau"* the whole multitude of mice become awe-struck and one by one they flee to safety. The moment they hear the *"miau"* they become convinced of their being vanquished and visualising the actions of the cat's teeth and paws makes them flee.

The main reason for this is the major difference between the hearts in the breast of the mice and the heart in the breast of the cat. The unity of the heart in the cat and the courage lying in it, is not found in the mice. Hence the mice becoming confounded and defeated in the presence of the cat, is proof thereof that the cat possesses unity of heart and courage. Otherwise it would appear that if a large number of mice should attack the cat, it will be impossible for the cat to escape.

Hence we conclude that even if the number of mice were a hundred thousand, still, seeing a weak and sickly cat, will cause all of them to run away. This proves that numbers mean nothing. The main thing is unity of the heart and courage.

EXAMPLE THREE

The sheep and goats may be numerous in number but in the face of the knife of the slaughterer, that number is of no consequence.

EXAMPLE FOUR

Sleep comes along and causes many thoughts and imaginations to be put out of the mind.

EXAMPLE FIVE

The lion in the forest courageously attacks a multitude of animals with horns and one alone gets the upper hand over them. Futhermore whichever animal he chooses from among them, he eats.

LESSON

Allah, the King of Kings, is the One who grants this unity of heart and such courage. This unity of the heart is of two kinds. One is natural, or common possessed by the Non Believers, polytheists and even animals.

The other form is that which is granted by Allah and comes about through the blessings of close contact with Allah. This is what the Sufis term as *"Nisbat"*, for which one has to strive.

It is a great favour from Allah to have contact with Him. And there is only one way of attaining this contact and that is through following the Shariat.

THE STORY OF SULTAN MAHMOOD GHAZNAWI

One night Sultan Mahmood went walking among his subjects after taking off his royal clothes and putting on ordinary clothes. He chanced to come upon a group of thieves who were consulting amongst themselves. On seeing him they asked him: *"Who are you?"*

The King (Sultan) replied: *"I am also one like yourselves"*. They understood that to mean that he was also a thief like themselves and allowed him to join their company. They then continued the conversation amongst themselves and it was decided that each one of them should explain what speciality or skill he possesses so that at the time of need a task could be put before him to show that special skill.

One of the thieves said: *"Friends, I have a special gift in my ears, that whenever a dog barks, I fully understand what he says."*

The second one said: *"I have a special gift in my eyes, that whatever I see in the darkness of night, I am able to recognise it in the light of day"*.

The third one said: *"I have this speciality in my arms that through the strength that lies in my arms, I can make a hole in the strongest wall, to enter a house"*.

The fourth one said: *"I have a special gift in my nose that by smelling the sand on the ground I am able to ascertain whether there is any treasure buried underneath it or not. It is just like in the case of Majnoon, who without being told, merely by smelling the ground, got to know where Layla was buried"*.

The fifth one said: *"I have such strength in my hands that no matter how high a building is, I can climb along its walls with my rope ladder and easily enter the building in this manner"*.

Thereafter they all asked the King: *"O Man, what special gift do you possess which we can make use of in our thieving activities?"* The King replied: *"I have this speciality in my beard that when criminals are handed over to their executioner, I merely shake my beard and such* *criminals are immediately set free"*. (In other words, if as a show of mercy I shake my beard, the criminals found guilty of murder, are set free).

On hearing this the thieves said:

"O dear Qutub, on the day of difficulty,
You will be our only means of salvation."

(In other words, if we are arrested, then through your blessings we will be saved. Now we do not have to fear, because the rest of us had the special gifts which would help us in our thieving exploits, but none of us had the means of granting safety from punishment. This speciality lies only with you. Now we need not have any fear of punishment. Now we can get on with our work).

They all went in the direction of the palace of Shah Mahmood with the King in their midst. Along the way a dog barked and the one who understood the dog's language translated: "The King is also in your midst". Although they heard it, no one paid any attention to this information, as their greed was uppermost in their minds.

One of them smelled the ground and explained that this is the Royal Palace. There is a treasure in this place. The other one threw a rope ladder against the wall. The other one made a hole in the wall and they all entered to burgle. Afterwards they divided the loot amongst themselves and hastily each one of them went to hide his share of the spoils.

The King noted each one's description and found out where each of them resided. He left them and secretly re-entered the Royal Palace.

The following day the King related the entire story to his courtiers and thereafter sent the policemen to arrest them and to inform them of their death sentence. When they were brought before the Court with hands bound together, they were all trembling in fear before the King's throne. However, the thief who had this special gift of recognising anybody during the day whom he had seen during the darkness, was quite at ease. In him together with the signs of fear there were also signs of hope. In other words, although he was struck by awe while standing before the King and although fearing the King's wrath and revenge, he also had the hope, that the King would be true to his word, that when in mercy he shakes his beard, criminals will be set free. Furthermore he also had the hope of setting free all his companions because the King will surely not turn away from all those whom he knew and recognised.

This person's face was changing from yellow to red, as within himself the feelings of fear and hope alternated. The Sultan Mahmood in Kingly dignity passed judgement that they all should be handed over to the Executioner to be hung on the gallows. As the King himself was witness to their crime, there was no need for any other witnesses. As soon as the King announced his judgement, this person appealed in great humility: *"Sire, with your permission, may I say something?"* The King permitted him to speak and he said: *"O Master, each one of us had exhibited his special gift which helped in this crime. Now it is time that the Kingly speciality should be exhibited according to the promise. I have all the while recognised you. Remember you had promised that in your beard there is this speciality, that if you cause it to move in mercy, the criminal will be saved from punishment. Hence, O King, shake your beard, so that through the blessings of your grace, all of us can be saved from the punishment of our crimes. Our specialities have brought us to the gallows. Now it is only your special gift that is left which can save us from being punished. Now is the time for the exhibition of your speciality. Kindly shake your beard. Because of fear our lives have reached right up to our mouths. Please save us with the special gift that lies in your beard."*

Sultan Mahmood smiled at the plea and became filled with mercy and grace as he heard their pitiful admission of guilt. He said: *"Each one of you have exhibited his special quality to such an extent that it has brought you to the brim of destruction, except in the case of this one. He recognised me as the Sultan. He saw me in the darkness of the night and recognised me as the Sultan. Hence for his having recognised me, I set all of you free. I feel ashamed at those eyes which recognised me not to shake my beard and thereby exhibit my special quality".*

LESSON

The first lesson contained in this story is that while a person is committing a crime the true King of Kings is with him, and is fully aware of all that he does. *"And He is with you wherever you are."* When a person commits any disobedience to Allah he is actually committing treachery against Him. Anyone who fails in his duty to Allah or in the rights which are due to men, is like a thief committing theft of Allah's treasures. For this reason, one should always bear in mind that the Master is the witness, seeing us at all times, and is aware of all that we do. If we commit any disobedience or iniquity, it means that in His very presence His treasury is being looted and robbed.

Think for a moment! Whom are you robbing? That King and Master tells you: *"I am seeing what you do. I am with you. My laws have been revealed to you. Today you are breaking that law. Today, in this world I will hide your fault, hoping that perhaps you will come upon the right road. But if you do not come to your senses, then tomorrow on the day of Qiyamat when you will be brought before Me, with hands bound together, then who will be able to save you from My anger and revenge?"*

The second lesson from this story is that Allah will punish sinners in the hereafter although He may initially overlook them in this world. We see that at the time the thieves were looting the Royal treasury, the Sultan witnessed the entire incident. He was with them and allowed them to proceed without being punished. However in the end, he had them arrested. If, at all times, this thought is uppermost in our minds that Allah sees all our deeds then there will surely be fear in the heart against committing sins.

The third lesson from this story is this that on the day of Qiyamat no special quality will be of any benefit. All those deeds which contravene the laws of Allah will on the day of Qiyamat be bound around man's neck even though, in this world, they were considered as being special qualities. The thieves mentioned those special gifts and qualities as if they were qualities of virtue, but in reality those very qualities were the cause of their destruction:

"Each one of them exhibited their special quality,
But all their qualities only caused their misfortune to increase".

Any special quality which does not bring a person nearer to his Creator, and which does not connect the heart to Allah, and which is not a medium towards the remembrance of Allah is no quality of virtue. In fact it is a curse and a misfortune. All the powers and attributes of man which are used in rebellion against Allah and towards disobedience and negligence, will one day cause him to be brought before Allah as a criminal.

All those nations who have made great progress and through scientific inventions have made this world subservient to them, but turn away from Allah, passing their lives in disobedience, will realise on the day of Qiyamat, whether that speciality of scientific progress had been the cause of receiving Allah's grace or His anger.

"Blessed be to you the subjugation of the sun and moon,
But if there is no light in the heart there is no light anywhere"

The fourth lesson from this story is that no special quality will be of benefit except that which leads towards recognising Allah, just like the person who having seen the Sultan, recognised him and through this special quality, he not only saved himself but was also able to intercede on behalf of his companions. As for his other companions, their special quality became a means towards earning Allah's punishment.

"Only the sight of the fortunate one was of any use
Who recognised the Sultan during darkness of night."

The lesson derived is that this world is like a place of darkness. In the darkness of this world, every servant of Allah who follows the Divine Laws of Shariat and through its blessings recognises Allah, will be provided with salvation against the punishment of hell-fire, on the day of Qiyamat. This recognition will also be a means towards intercession on behalf of other criminals, from among the sinners of the people of faith. However, there should not be any pride and over confidence in this recognition. In fact, one should alternate between fear and hope and in utmost humility beg for this intercession. Then Allah will accept this intercession from whomsoever He wishes according to His Mercy. For those whom He will not accept this intercession, He will in perfect justice exhibit His overwhelming vengeance.

Hence, fortunate indeed is the person who, in this world, created within himself the knowledge of recognising Allah. The Aarifeen (True knowers of Allah) who through their spiritual efforts and exercises recognise Allah with their souls, will tomorrow on the day of Qiyamat see Allah and attain salvation. Furthermore their intercession on behalf of other sinners will also be accepted. But the disbelievers and criminals will through their special qualities be admitted into hell-fire. On that day these poor starving ones with pale faces, patched and coarse clothing, who today are being ridiculed and jeered at, will feast their eyes upon the countenance of Allah. On that day, the criminals will envy them: *"Would that we had lived like them in the world and acquired their qualities. Would that we had recognised Allah properly!"*

The fifth lesson is this that the story also illustrates the high position these righteous and saintly ones have as far as their humanity is concerned.

What a pity it is that nations and people, just like those thieves, spend their short span of worldly lives looking upon means of delight and comfort as special gifts of accomplishment, and look upon material progress as being actual progress. Whereas on the other hand, they have adopted uncouth habits like urinating while standing and cleansing themselves with paper after defecating. They also consider it normal to take a bath sitting in a tub and allow the water, which had become dirtied through being in contact with the anus to be drawn into their mouth and nose. They consider these actions as the norms of society. Can such people ever be considered to be cultured and people of progress? What a pity it is that the beloved cultural ways of Muslims should be cast aside and that such despicable ways of these people should be adopted.

DUAH

"O Allah, let just rulers be appointed to rule over us, who will introduce Thy Laws, and punish those who neglect salaat, consume alcohol, gamble, commit adultery, steal, etc. Let them punish those women who refuse to observe the rules of purdah. Let him order the closure of cinema houses, prostitution quarters and liquor houses". Ameen.

THE STORY OF THE VEILED KING

A very handsome saintly person who was initially very greedy for wealth and government position ruled as a king over some part of Arabia. He was a good poet of a very sensitive temperament, involved in sensual love. When Divine love took possession of his heart, he lost all interest in the affairs of the state and gave up sensual love.

The author of Qasida-e-Burda says:

"When at night the thoughts of my beloved enters my mind,
Then for the entire night sleep flies away and all pleasures turn to sorrow."

Finally he arose at night, wrapped a shawl around him, covered his face and left his Sultanate. At that time Divine Love had taken possession of his heart and the hustle and bustle of government, was proving to be a blockage in the remembrance of the Beloved. The moment had arrived when his patience ran out. He uttered a cry and like a mad person, set forth towards the desert. The sincere cry from this true lover released him from the chains of governing. When one initially enters upon this path, the first stages are caused by one becoming attracted to the path.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:
"Create the bounty of madness in your heart (of His love)
Not by intelligence alone will you reach to the truth."
(For if the mind is not enlightened by revelation,
It is better to remain an ignorant one.)

A special quality of this Love is that one desires to sit down in solitude, remembering his Beloved, which brings great ecstasy. For this reason the silence of the desert is so well-sought after by these true lovers. Rasulullah ﷺ used to say: *"Before I was endowed with Prophethood, solitude was made beloved to me."* Hence he withdrew himself from all men and looked for the solitude in the Cave of Hira, where for several days on end he spent the time meditating and remembering Allah.

Similar was the case of this King. He vacated the throne of his Sultanate and in the middle of the night proceeded towards the desert.

"When Divine Love had its effect,
It made rest and comfort disagreeable.
When he experienced the ecstasy of love,
He removed the crown from his head.
He exchanged the Royal Throne for a life of poverty.
Well done, O True Lover, well done!
Ask about the ecstasy of love from him,
Whose heart has been injured by love." (Akhtar)

How can ordinary beings understand this love and ecstasy? How can they know the pleasure of solitude and the delights of the howling winds in the desert? Ask those true servants of Allah Taala, whose lives have become independent of the pleasures of this temporary world and are enjoying the closeness of Allah Taala in solitude. The pleasure of this solitude is such, that thousands of gatherings may be sacrificed for it. It is such a meeting of the true beloved that it transforms the solitude of the lover into full spring bloom.

Moulana Muhammad Ahmed Saheb says:

"If You are not with, then I feel distressed even in a rose garden

If You are with then I enjoy the taste of a rose garden even in a desert"

In fact from the silence of the desert he gets the message from his friend.

"I have forgotten all the stories of the Rose garden
the silence of the desert has given me a message"

The King commenced travelling over mountains and rivers, over deserts and plains until he was outside the boundaries of his Sultanate and reached Tabook. He threw a veil over his face so that people would not recognise him. In Tabook he suffered starvation and hunger for several days. At last, being reduced to weakness, he went to work with some labourers, who were making bricks. He worked with the veil over his face but from time to time the veil was lifted by the wind and the other labourers became aware of his noble facial features. In the end the word spread among the labourers that this veiled one is an ambassador of some country, or perhaps the King of a country. The word spread even further in the land until it also reached the King of Tabook.

The king of Tabook became worried that an ambassador or a King of another country had joined the labourers to spy on his

Kingdom and launch an attack after acquiring the secrets of the state. He thought that it would be best to personally investigate the matter. Hence the King of Tabook made preparation to travel and soon entered the ranks of the labourers, with whom the veiled King was busy making bricks. The King ordered all the other labourers to move away and then personally removed the veil from the face of the handsome and noble-faced one. The King then addressed the veiled one: *"O Handsome One, tell me the truth. Who are you? Your enlightened face informs me that you are the King of some country, but why this poverty? It seems that you have sacrificed your comfort and royalty, for this want and poverty. O Man of courage, may my Sultanate of Tabook and all Sultanates be sacrificed for your courage. Quickly tell me your secret! If you would be my guest, I would indeed consider it my good fortune. I would derive endless pleasure through the nearness of your company".*

In this manner the King of Tabook spoke to the veiled King who was poorly dressed and appealed to him to relate his true story. But in spite of the pleasant conversation, the veiled one, instead of revealing his secret, spoke to the King about Divine love, in such a manner, that the heart of the King of Tabook also became filled with this Divine Love. He too decided to leave his Sultanate and to remain in the company of the veiled one.

Then during the night both of them started walking towards another Kingdom in order that the subjects may not worry them and so that the two of them could in solitude remember Allah. They walked for a long way until they entered another Kingdom.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that Divine Love was not responsible for this abandonment of wealth, splendour and power of government, once only. It has happened so many times that a person is prepared to sacrifice wealth and splendour for the sake of Divine Love. None the less, the veiled one who had abandoned his Kingdom must have enjoyed great ecstasy in his love of Allah Taala that he also influenced the King of Tabook to cast aside his Kingdom and to adopt a saintly ascetic life, forsaking all worldly comforts and becoming filled with Divine love.

"O Love-sick one, what did you blow into my heart
That it is a river of blazing fire passing through my heart."
(Khwaja Saheb)

Khwaja Saheb Majzoob (R.A.) had written a couplet about his Murshid Hakeemul-Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) in which he speaks of this blazing fire of love:

"The heart whose "Ah's" have burnt numerous hearts,
How much of blazing fire is hidden therein?"

Just as fire spreads from one house to another, so does Divine Love spread from one heart to another.

Hazrat Rumi (R.A.) says that from one heart to another there are secret ways. He goes on to explain this phenomenon of the heart to heart influence with a beautiful example. He says:

"Understand the secret unseen ways of heart to heart contact like this:
When two lamps are being lit
The lamps will remain separate
But their light will become intermixed."

In other words, if the lamps are lit, it is impossible to say which light belongs to which lamp. Similarly the bodies of Mumineen are different, but when they sit together in a gathering the enlightenment (anwaar) from their hearts become as one in the atmosphere of the gathering place.

This is one of the reasons why the courier of this Shariat, the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave the advise to the Muslims to have mutual consultation over matters of importance. Among the other points of wisdom in mutual consultation is that when ten Muslims gather for consultation, then it is like ten lamps burning together in one place and their light being so much stronger than one light, hence in the light of this increased light of Imaan and Yaqeen, the truth is uncovered.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Consult with the assembly of righteous,
For the Prophet ﷺ was also ordered to do that.
The minds of men are like lighted lamps,
The light of twenty lamps surely gives more light than one."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) further says: *"This is also the reason why Rasulullah ﷺ prohibited monasticism, because by casting aside the world and going to settle alone in a cave in the mountains, the idea of mutual rectification and consultation is lost."* He says: *"Thus the Prophet ﷺ prohibited monasticism and living in solitude in the mountains, so that no one may be deprived of the benefit of mutual contact and blessings acquired through the company of Saintly ones."*

Allah has placed such healing powers in the sights of some of the saintly ones, that by their mere casting of a glance, an evil-doer is transformed into a righteous one, and mischievous ones become doers of good.

Judge Akbar Ilahabadi puts it this way:

"Neither from books nor from preaching nor from gold,
Deen comes alive through the glances of the Saintly ones."

Here an objection may be raised, that the story being told here refers to a King who had cast aside his Kingdom and the whole world. Is not this also a case of the prohibited monasticism? The answer to this question is this: For the King to discard his throne, to choose a life of poverty and join the poor labourers is not monasticism. Monasticism means to absolutely avoid all contact with society. The king did not abandon the world, he changed his lifestyle, from that of a royal one to that of an ordinary one..

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) continues with the story saying that the veiled King must have told the King of Tabook many things regarding Divine Love for him to immediately experience contact with Allah. The King of Tabook said:

"May Allah reward you well for opening my eyes,

And for having joined me to the true Beloved".

He also told the veiled King:

"Take me with you. Your heart is like the fountain head of the fire of love.
I beg of you, fill my heart also with true Divine Love.
Casting aside your Kingdom, joining the ranks of ordinary labourers,
Making bricks, dressed in garments of poor ones,
Is a clear proof that you have surely seen within yourself
Another Kingdom, which includes the whole world within itself."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that, apart from these two Kings, there were many others who discarded their Kingdoms for the sake of Divine Love. When the Divine Love struck them they became victims thereof. It is said that to be killed by Allah's Divine Love once only, is better than to live a thousand lives and for the bondage that comes about after attaining such Love, is worth sacrificing even a thousand Kingdoms. When one is struck by such Love, then the body becomes neglected as a result of the strenuous spiritual exercises but when the great bounty of Nisbat (contact with Allah) becomes uncovered, one is bound to exclaim:

"Love has reduced my life by half
But in return I have never-ending nearness to Him"

LESSON

The lesson in this story is this:

"O Self, look with insight and in truth,
You will discover that in place of a life of governing,
A life of a dervish is better."

THE STORY OF SULTAN KING IBRAHIM BIN ADHAM (R.A.)

Divine love made Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) cast aside the Kingdom of Balkh after which for ten years he remained in ibaadat in a cave at Nayshapur. In this way he acquired the inner Kingdom.

"Is the Kingdom of the heart preferable
Or the despised Kingdom of Balkh?"

There are two main ways of reaching Allah and for both of these ways there is substantiation from the Holy Quran:

اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِىْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ

1) *"Allah chooses for Himself whom He wishes"*

In other words Allah attracts towards Himself those whom He pleases.

This is called the manner of Jazb - attraction.

وَ يَهْدِىْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ

2) *"And He guides towards Himself*
those who turn to Him in repentance"

This is called the manner of sulook (effort).

Sulook is a voluntary act whereas Jazb is an involuntary act. A person is commanded to adopt the manner of Sulook, but generally everyone following the way of Sulook (personal effort) will receive a measure of Jazb (attraction) from Allah as a result of the spiritual rigours he undertakes, because without any special bounty from Allah, no one can be successful.

In any case both these ways - Jazb and Sulook, through Allah's grace leads towards the objective and become fruitful for the heart's progress.

"A single shadow of Allah's Graceful favour
Is more fruitful than a thousand efforts in obedience".

Thus when Allah's Mercy and favour touched Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) without him exerting himself in spiritual exercises, the King of Balkh was proved to be successful. He cast aside the Kingdom of Balkh, but acquired an inner Kingdom which was far better than the whole world. In fact all the treasures of heaven and earth appeared as nothing before it. The King himself did not realise what would be the result of casting aside the fertile and well irrigated lands of his Kingdom, for the sake of Divine Love. Initially he was unable to foresee how worthless pebbles would be replaced with valuable jewels and how a thorn bush would be exchanged for a flower garden. This is what happens when good fortune comes to a person.

"Listen dear friend, when a time of good arrives
It will surely inform you of the opportune moments".

One night Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) was lying asleep on the upper story of his palace, when he suddenly felt someone shaking his leg. He was immediately struck by surprise and wonder as to who could be so brave as to intrude into the upper story of the King's palace. He asked: *"O you arrivals, who are you?"* They were a group of angels in human form, who had come from Allah's side with the aim of bringing about an upheaval in the heart of an unmindful one. The angels answered: *"We are here, seeking our lost camel."* The King replied: *"I am surprised that you search for a lost camel in the upper story of the King's palace."* They replied: *"We are even more surprised that, in this atmosphere of pomp and comfort, you wish to find Allah".*

"They enquired of him, how is it that you
Seek to meet Allah while sitting on the throne?"

Having said that the angels disappeared, but they had left such an effect on the King's heart that his heart became disenchanted with his Kingdom and his ruling over it.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) advises:

"O People! like Ibrahim, say farewell to your Kingdom
So that you may acquire the great inner Kingdom."

The final result was that Ibrahim bin Adham (R.A.) discarded the Kingdom and all worldly loves. The author of Qasida-e-Burda says:

"Yes when at night the thought of my beloved enters the mind,
Sleep flies away and all pleasures become changed to sorrow and pain."

Then in the latter part of the night, the King arose from his bed, put a blanket over him and walked out of his Kingdom. One sigh from the heart of burning Divine Love blew away the confined walls of the Kingdom which had imprisoned him and Divine madness removed the curtains from his mind.

"When he uttered one sigh, his prison vanished
And when madness struck him, his senses flew away".

Having left Balkh, Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) proceeded towards the desert of Nayshapur where be engaged himself in Zikr and uttering the cries of true lovers.

"O Beloved, very well liked by thee are your lover's cries,
And till the day of Qiyamat, that is all I desire.
O true Beloved, occupy me not with anything else except your remembrance
And please retire me not from being filled with your love.
O Allah, whoever has seen thee and tasted the pleasure of nearness to Thee,
Let him not ever experience the sorrow of separation.
The remembrance of Allah is the food for the soul
And remembrance of the beloved is the medicine for the heart, injured by love."

For ten years Ibrahim bin Adham (R.A.) dwelt in the desert of Nayshapur, like a mad man, remaining busy with ibaadah. In my Urdu Mathnavi, I have described the incident thus:

"Listen to the story of Ibn Adham,
Who used to be the King of Balkh.
When true love captured his heart,
His Sultanate became a burden to him.

He discarded the Kingdom and all wealth and pomp
And adopted a path towards the wilderness.
Filled with sorrow, he remained there,
Cleansing himself and purifying the heart.
For ten years he dwelt there attracted to the Lord.
And night and day Divine Love glowing in him.
In the cave of Nayshapur this pure soul
Remained repeating the name of Allah.
He remained dressed in the attire of the poor
The King of Balkh remained homeless.
He had left aside royalty and all royal comforts
And cut off his relationship with all comforts and ease.
He now only connected himself to the Lord,
While turning the back towards all else.
The love of Allah is not easy O friends!
The love of Allah is not cheap O friends!
Since when does love fear
The criticism of critics.
Love does not care if the life has to go.
The road of love lurks with dangers
The heart and soul turns to blood in this path.
Very costly is this commodity of love.
The love of Allah is obtained with great sacrifice and many tears.
In the ocean of love there are waves of blood.
This is not the road of the faint hearted.
Love does not fear humiliation.
Love does not care for fame and name.
The love of Allah alone is the food of the lovers.
The love of Allah alone is the coolness of the hearts of the truthful ones.
He (Bin Adham) discarded the kingdom and covered himself with a blanket
And adorned the garb of poverty.
His kingly pomp got hidden in the blanket of poverty.
Within the blanket of poverty was hidden the glory of the king.

When the body of the king of Balkh
Became infatuated in the love and remembrance of Allah,
He became aware of the taste of being a Dervish
And his heart gained the recognition of Allah.

A question may be asked: If Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.), for the sake of Allah's love, rejected the throne of Balkh, was he foolish? The answer is No. He was not foolish because the Kingdom of Balkh and in fact all the worldly Kingdoms together, have no importance or weight in the sight of Allah.

The true Lover of Allah says:
"O Allah, You have explained Your value being both the worlds.
If by giving both the worlds, You are attained,
Both worlds are nothing in exchange for Your person.
Even if a person should sacrifice his life for it,
Then too the full price has not been paid.
To become martyred for the sake of Thy Love,
Is better than a thousand lives
And many are the Kingdoms to be sacrificed for Thy bondage."

Hence, we conclude, that the Love of Allah is not cheap. Rasulullah ﷺ had said: *"Verily the price for the goods of Allah is very expensive"*.

When the heart experiences the sweetness and ecstasy of Allah's love, then the beloved life of the lover becomes devoid of any value.

"If the splendour of the love for the True Beloved is experienced,
Then in longing you are prepared to sacrifice life itself."O people, if
the heart experiences the splendour of Allah's nearness,
The pleasures of the whole world appear wretched to you."

Hence, on experiencing the ever abiding inner Sultanate which Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) acquired after sacrificing the worldly kingdom of Balkh, he would have exclaimed:

"May the Lovers of this world and Kingdoms enjoy their world,
Soon it will pass away

But for the True Lover of God,
A Kingdom that never ends."

Now, for casting aside such a small world and Kingdom, if a person gains such an everlasting Kingdom, then what rational being can object to a little discomfort. Similarly, if a great treasure lies buried under the foundations of a house, who will feel sorrow, if that house is demolished to take out the treasure?

"O friend, treasures are generally buried in places of destruction.
Hence, destroy the body and its powers to attain it."

In other words, the lustful and illicit cravings of the flesh should be curbed and not be granted obedience, so that after destroying those sensual lusts, one may attain nearness to Allah and sound contact with Him, which is the attainment and acquisition of a treasure.

The great pleasure which Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) attained through Zikr and Ibaadah on the banks of a river in the wilderness, are things which only he could describe.

"No one save the heavens were aware of his sighs of love and of pain.
And no one save Allah was aware of the secrets of his love."

As Ibrahim bin Adham (R.A.) had chosen solitude for himself, he was busy remembering his Lord and Master amidst the sounds of the wilderness. The best places for the Lovers of Allah are those, where none but Allah is aware of their communion with Him.

"O Beloved, in both worlds, the best place is that where I can prostrate myself upon Thy feet
And where in words of love You and I can converse."

The same theme is mentioned by Khwaja Majzoob (R.A.) who says:

"I have this intense longing to be in such a place of solitude,
Where I can sit alone and remember Him with my heart,
To reside where the sky is filled with signs of Lovers,

To remain there where the earth is filled with broken hearts."

When the lovers of Allah listen to His name being recited, they become intoxicated with his love in their souls. Moulana Kandhlawy (R.A.) in his Khaatam-e-Mathnawy says:

"O Allah when I mention Thy Name,
I feel such sweetness and ecstasy,
That it appears as if rivers of honey
Are set flowing from every hair of my body."

It is this ecstatic pleasure which causes one to go so far as to discard his very Kingdom.

Shirazi (R.A.) puts it this way:

"The remembrance of the Beloved makes the Lovers completely oblivious of themselves
And the Zikr of the Beloved makes them unaware of the whole world around them.
In the remembrance of the True One they adopt solitude, staying away from people,
And they become so absorbed in the love of the true one,
That no notice is even taken of His material favours,
Since they are the lovers of him alone."

Thus Sultan Ibrahim Bin Adham's (R.A.) most significant favour which he acquired was his nearness to Allah and it is this nearness which made him drunk with love and oblivious of everything else.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"O people, if for just a moment you experience the glory of Allah's nearness,
You will be prepared to sacrifice your precious life in the vigour's of spiritual efforts."

In other words, you will be prepared to undergo severe spiritual efforts for the sake of Allah's pleasure and you will be prepared to accept being a slave of a True Lover, and you will pray in a restless manner: *"Fill my heart with Divine Love"*

"If you should see the splendour of Allah's nearness,
Then in comparison therewith the whole world and its pleasures will sink into insignificance.
When the True Sultan exhibits His glory and splendour,
The whole world sinks into nothingness."

In other words: In the case of the heart unto which Allah exhibits His glory and splendour, the whole world and all that is connected with it will become valueless. The heart which is endowed with special grace and bounty from Allah and unto which He clearly shows the realisation of the mortality of this world, this realisation makes it easy for it to exert itself in rigorous spiritual efforts (Mujahadah) as a result of which *"reaching unto Allah"* is acquired.

It is Allah's general manner of action that a person should first involve himself with strenuous spiritual exercises and thereafter attain the pleasure of *"reaching unto Allah"*. But, sometimes He reverses the process by pulling the unmindful servant towards Him (by Jazb). The manner of recognising this is that the subject experiences within himself an attraction and a feeling of love towards Allah. This is the way of Jazb (attraction) which overtakes the person in the initial stages, through which the longing for spiritual exercises and ibaadah is created.

This is what happened to Hazrat Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) as a result of which his throne and Kingdom became insignificant in his heart. The saints of Allah feel His nearness in their inner selves and through this great favour become independent of the bounties of this world. You may ask those saints what ecstatic pleasure they feel within themselves. One saintly person says:

"O people, look not upon my pale face and think I am in trouble and in suffering.
Yes, I am weak of body, but through Allah's Grace, no power on earth can move my feet from the path of steadfastness".

The specially chosen saints of Allah, although outwardly they appear in wretched condition with hair hanging all over, yet as far as their spiritual progress is concerned, they are far ahead of hundreds of thousands of other men.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) quotes Allah as saying:

"O people, be aware and listen carefully,
These shawl covered ones are my special servants.
Their sorrowful and distressed bodies,
Are superior than thousands of other human beings."

The reason for this superiority is that they have made the dust valuable from which they have been created, through the blessings of *"contact with Allah"*. This is the reason why the dust of their bodies has become much more valuable and beloved to Allah Ta'ala than thousands of disobedient and neglectful persons. Apart from that, the body has no real value. It is like a bottle or a glass which costs merely a rupee or two. But if it is filled with high quality scent, it will be as valuable as the amount of scent it contains. It may even be worth hundred thousand rupees. The value of the bottle depends on the amount of scent it contains. Similarly is the case with our body. It's value increases according to the amount of *"contact with Allah"*. It is for this very reason that the ground where Rasulullah ﷺ is buried, is considered higher in virtue than the *"Arsh"* and the *"Kursi"*. Similarly, the bodies of a disbeliever and a believer are made from earth. Both contain the same four elements. But the difference between the two bodies is that one is simply a collection of earth while the other contains the valuable *"contact with Allah"*. One is merely an empty bottle or glass, while the other is a glass containing fragrant scent.

Thus, the value of the body of a believer is such that Allah has purchased it with His nearness and pleasure:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَٰلَهُم بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ ٱلْجَنَّةَ ۚ

"Verily Allah has purchased from the believers their selves and their

possessions."

(Al-Quran: Surah Tawbah)

On the other hand there are the disbelievers whose bodies will be burnt in hell-fire forever and they will be continuously deprived of looking upon Allah's countenance.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوبُونَ

"Nay they will be in a curtain prevented."
(from looking at Allah on that day)

(Al-Quran)

This announcement of being prevented from looking at Him, is a sign of Allah's state of being a Beloved one (Shaan-e-Mahboobiyat). Compare this with the rulers of this world. From the origins of this world till now, no ruler has ever announced a punitive sentence such as this, viz. That the evil-doer will be deprived of looking at the judge or ruler. Here Allah says to the unbelievers: *"You are not fit that I should honour you with a look at Me."* This is said with great emphasis" *"Kallaa", Nay! Never!"* Then He mentions His own Lordship (Ruboobiyat) which is the cause (illat) for *"Mahboobiyat"* (belovedness).

This is what Allah had explained to me through His Grace. Hence the body of man, which has not attained nearness to Allah or contact with Him, will be removed from *"Ahsane Taqweem"*, (the best of moulds) and reduced to *"Asfala Saafileen"*, (the lowest of the low) which in Allah's sight is worse than a bottle of urine.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:
"Do not call that heart a lamp, wherein Allah's noor does not reside,
Because of worldly love and negligence, it is a urine filled bottle."

Hence it would be wrong to call an unmindful heart a lamp and to praise it in any way. The body of one possessor of noor is better than thousands of neglectful or unmindful ones. Allah's special servants are free from this worldly love but are imprisoned by His Love.

At this stage one should also understand the meaning of *"dunya"*. Everything which diverts one's attention from Allah is *"dunya"*. If a ruler is diverted from Allah by his governing, then this rule and governing is *"dunya"*. If being poor makes one negligent of Allah, such poverty is also *"dunya"*. It is possible for a person to be a ruler or a governor and still remain righteous and religious and it is also possible that one can be poor and still be irreligious. From this we deduce that the person who disregards the commandments of Allah, is a worldly person, even though he may be poor and destitute. On the other hand if a King, in spite of being a ruler over a Kingdom, carries out the commands of Allah, he is a *"Wali"* and most definitely not a worldly person.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Actually, ' dunya' means being neglectful of Allah's commands.
It is not a name for children, wife, wealth and possessions."

The example of *"dunya"* is like water. A ship sails on it. As long as the water is outside and underneath the ship, it is the means whereupon the ship sails. But when the water comes inside the ship, then it can be the cause for the sinking of the ship and its destruction.

Similarly, if the *"dunya"* stays outside the heart, as in the case when Allah's love is above the love for wealth, children, wife and all relationships, then this *"dunya"* is not harmful. On the contrary, it is a means towards Allah's pleasure and nearness to Him. But when this *"dunya"* has entered the heart and the love for these worldly entities becomes uppermost over Allah's love, then this *"dunya"* becomes a means towards his destruction because the heart has been created by Allah for Himself.

In a Hadith Qudsi Allah says:

"Heavens and earth cannot contain me.

But into the heart of a believer I enter like a guest."

Hence, the heart is like a Royal Palace which is only kept for the true King of Kings and not for anyone else. So, if one allows a bhangi (remover of toilet buckets) with clothes soiled in filth to live in such a Royal Palace, then this will be a great injustice and the doer will deserve punishment. Therefore a person should leave this wretched *"dunya"* outside the heart and not allow it to enter inside. But how can one ascertain whether *"dunya"* has entered the heart or not. The criterion of ascertaining this lies herein. If a person, at all times, is busy with preparations for the hereafter, trying, at all times to gain Allah's pleasure and places every law of Shariah above his personal gains, then you may take it that the *"dunya"* is outside this person's heart, and that his heart is free from *"dunya's love"*. For him the *"dunya"* becomes a means of blessings and a means towards attaining the everlasting life and the true life.

But if for the sake of his love for his wife and children, a man casts the Laws of Shariat behind his back and makes no distinction between haraam and halaal, is not observant of preparing for the hereafter at all times, but is at all times involved with earning wealth, then you may take it that *"dunya"* has entered this person's heart. This *"dunya"* will be a means towards his destruction.

Hazrat Khwaja Majzoob (R.A.) Saheb says:

"In acquiring the worldly, lessen your desire. Place deen ahead of it."

The outward appearances of the saints of Allah seems wretched and distressed. They experience great enjoyment therein. The reason is that, in their inner selves, they experience a splendid garden of nearness to Allah. Their inner freshness and splendour makes them independent of outer adornment. What decorations and adornments are needed for the walls of a rose garden?

"Even though outwardly
I appear as a poor and as an insane one,
The truth of the matter is I am not so,
I am in reality drunk
With the drink of Love of the "Saqi", Everlasting."*

The Love of Allah and His remembrance is so filled with sweetness that all the worldly bounties are nothing in comparison with Allah's Zikr. And whomsoever Allah causes to taste His Love and to experience the ecstasy of making Zikr - you may ask them whether it is true that to say once: *"Allah!"* gives more pleasure than all the bounties of this world or not?

"Ask the pleasure of having the head severed from Yahya.
Ask the pleasure of having the body sliced from Zakariyya
And the pleasure of laying down the head for slaughter,
Ask Ismail the pleasure thereof."

The people who only perceive the outward appearance of things are unable to experience the great ecstasy in these matters. Allah has jealously pulled a curtain over the special favours given to His saintly servants, so that those not sincere and not interested in Him, cannot even get a glimpse thereof. He has hidden the treasure from them. In their outwardly wretched appearance and ruined state, they hide the great bounty of *"contact with Allah"*. It is a secret bond between bondsman and Master which is hidden from others. Every person who has this contact with Allah (Nisbat) is of a different colour. The utterances of every lover is different. Every one has a different kind of 'Ah' or sigh. This is the reason that we find that one Wali (saint) is unaware of the spiritual status of another Wali (saint). Both of them may be True Lovers of Allah but every lover has a different taste in his/her communion.

"That which emanates from the heart of someone, is not our utterance.
And the pain in our heart, no one else knows of."

Note: *. One who gives the drink.

When Hazrat Sultan Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.) experienced the full force of his *'Nisbat'* and contact with Allah, what was the end result? He became devoid of all lusts and became independent of all adornments. Look at the difference! At one time he was sitting on the throne with a crown on his head. Now he was sitting on the bank of a river with torn and tattered clothes on him. Then one day the Chief Minister of the Kingdom of Balkh happened to pass that way.

"The Sultan was mending his tattered clothes when a Minister passed by
Seeing the Sultan he looked at him with scorn, considering it an act of foolishness,
That having discarded the worldly Kingdom, like a poor one he lived.
Ibrahim came to know through Kashf (inspiration), the Minister was surprised at his poor state."

Hence the Sultan exhibited his miraculous powers of the inner Kingdom, so that the Wazir (minister) may change his wrong concept of him and may come to know that through contact with Allah, what bounties are forthcoming. He threw his needle into the water and loudly made duah: *"O Allah, give me back my needle"*. Immediately thousands of fish appeared on the surface of the water, each with a needle of gold in its mouth.

"The fish lifted their heads from the water
And said: O Sheikh, accept these needles from Allah's side."

When the Wazir saw this miracle he became very sorry for the wrong conception which he had formed. He became ashamed and gave an *"Ah"* and said:

"Alas! The fish are aware of the high position of this Sheikh
While I, as a human, am unaware thereof.
I am unfortunate and deprived, while the fish are fortunate for this bounty."

The Wazir was overtaken by weeping and bitterly wept for a long time. Having been in contact with the Sheikh for a short while, a complete transformation came over him and soon through the blessings of the contact with the Sheikh, his head too became filled with Love for Allah. This is what Allah does through the blessings of His special saintly servants. Misfortune changes to good fortune.

In a Hadith we are taught:

هُمُ الْجُلَسَاءُ لَايَشْقٰى بِهِمْ جَلِيْسُهُمْ

"Those who sit in the company of the Saintly ones
Will never be deprived and be of ill-fortune."

Hence, we see the great progress made by the Wazir through his sorrow and weeping.

"When the heart weeps, the essence of love is created in the heart
And no illness is like this blessed illness.
When in the heart contact with Allah becomes established,
Then this heart is worth calling a heart."

After Sultan Ibrahim (R.A.) had exhibited his miracle to the Wazir, he asked him: *"O Ameer, what is better? This Kingdom of the heart or the wretched, perishable Kingdom of Balkh?"*

I have written this in the following words:

"Then said the King of Balkh, O Wazir,
What is better, the Kingdom of the heart or the wretched Kingdom of Balkh?
Of what benefit was the Sultanate of Balkh?
Now at last I experience comfort in my life.
The hustle and bustle of State provea to be a headache.
Now I am a beggar but at the same time King of land and sea.
Through the ecstasy of Zikr, I am drunk and happy.
I am free from all worries and troubles,
The humiliation of love has become an honour to me.
I have taken upon me poverty and became a King."

When the Wazir, through the blessings of the King of Balkh, had attained the inner Kingdom of the heart, he immediately decided to resign from the Ministry and he chose to become a companion of the Sultan in the desert. Up to now, for the whole of his life, he had been a slave of rational thinking, but he finally became successful through having become mad in the love for Allah.

"I tested reasoning but when nothing successful emerged,
I made myself into a madman and I was successful.
And when madness proved fruitful and caused me to reach my Beloved,
I became in love with madness and cast aside reason.
O True Beloved, to utter cries in Thy remembrance appears very good.
O Allah, grant me the ability to continue crying to you till Qiyamat."

LESSON

This story teaches us that Allah's love and the bounties of the hereafter are so much more better and greater than the blessings of this world and all that lies in it. In it we are taught to discard the love of this perishable world.

Khwaja Majzoob (R.A.) says:

"This world is no place for enjoyment
It is a place of taking heed and is not sport and play."

Hazrat Saadi Shirazi (R.A.) says:

"O Self! If you should ponder deeply, you will come to the conclusion
That it is best to adopt a life of poverty over a life of riches."

It is true that one day, we will have to leave this world and after death the poor and the King will be equal in the grave.

"When the Indian, the Qaychaki, European and the African reach the grave,
They all become of one colour, all turn to dust.
This drink and kebab and sugar are all from one dust,
But the dust has been coloured in various colours."

THE STORY OF HAZRAT PIR CHANGI (R.A.)

During the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar (R.A.) there was a man with a melodious voice who used to play a harp. The beauty of his voice was such that it greatly affected men, women and children. Whenever he used to pass by singing on his way from the jungle, even the birds and animals used to gather to listen to him.

Gradually, as he grew older and his voice through old age became less attractive, those who used to rave over his voice began ignoring him. Now, wherever he went, no one would even ask about him. Thus his fame and popularity vanished and he began to experience the solitude of being unknown, and as a result started feeling pangs of starvation and hunger.

Noticing this selfish disinterest amongst the people, one day when he was very sad, he said to himself: *"O Allah, when I had a beautiful voice, people used to flock around me like butterflies and they entertained me from all sides. Now I have been ignored as I have become old and my voice is no longer beautiful. These selfish people are even fleeing from my shadow. How sorry I am that I had attached my heart to such unfaithful people! How full of deceit was not this contact with them! If only I had turned to Thee, if only I had remained busy day and night with Thy remembrance, and if only I had fixed my hopes on Thee, then I would not have seen the disappointment of this day"*.

Pir Changi's (R.A.) heart became very sorrowful and tears started flowing from his eyes. Suddenly at that moment from the unseen, the force of Jazb pulled his heart towards Allah.

"When on the earth there fell my tears,
In the heavens rose the star of my bondage."

Pir Changi (R.A.) uttered one long cry, turned his back to the people and like a madman went towards the graveyard in Madina Shareef. There he took refuge in a cave of an ancient grave wherein he sat down, and weeping bitterly he prayed: "O *Allah, today I am Thy guest, because people have discarded me. There* *is for me no other place of refuge except with Thee. There is now no one except Thee to purchase my voice. Acquaintances have left me and old age has overtaken me. Now I have no other refuge except with Thee. O Allah, I turn to Thee with great hopes. Do not send me back disappointed."*

I (i.e. Hakim Akhtar) have explained this in the following words in my Mathnavi:*

"Pir Changi prayed earnestly:
"O Allah, People were like moths around me when my voice was good.
Now there is jeering for my voice
And useless is this art of harp and instruments.
Now Thy help to me is most necessary.
My musical art has become useless."
My story is a lesson for all.
Even though Pir Changi is of bad character
But Thy Majesty is indeed Great.
Except for Thy door there is no other refuge.
Leaving you, where else shall I go?
After trying all other plans of mine,
Now only to Thee do I turn my sight."

Pir Changi (R.A.) remained in the ancient cave, remaining busy with his cries to Allah while tears continued to stream from him until the Mercy of Allah got into action. In this way Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ was informed by means of ilhaam (inspiration):

"O Umar رضی اللہ عنہ, there is one servant of Mine who, because of his melodious voice, used to be very well loved and popular among men. Now, because of old age, the beauty of his voice has disappeared and all the people have discarded him and this fall from grace and popularity has become the cause of his repentance and his turning towards Me. Now My Infinite Mercy has purchased his soul.

Even though he may have been a sinner and negligent, I accept his cries

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* Volume two of this book.

For in My sight there is no other refuge for My bondsman, save in Me.

O Umar رضي الله عنه, take some wealth from the Baitul Maal, go to the graveyard and give My Salaam to this troubled bondsman of Mine. Give the money to him and inform him that as from today Allah has made him 'near' to Him and that He has granted him a special favour. Now there is no need for him to be sad and grieved. O Umar رضي الله عنه, tell this bondsman of Mine that from now onwards Allah has, from the unseen, arranged for his daily sustenance".

"To the Throne has reached your cries and weeping.
Your Buyer has been your Lord Most High.
In your veins flow the blood of your liver,
In your cries lies the pains of your liver.
Your weeping in sorrow has been accepted,
Be not sad and dejected over poverty.
Through Allah's attraction to you, you have become special to Him,
Throw away your harp and musical instruments."

Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه, on receiving this message through ilham (inspiration), became restless. He took some money from the Baitul Maal and proceeded towards the graveyard in Madina Shareef. When he arrived there he saw an old man lying asleep in an ancient grave with a harp next to him, and with the sign of tears on his face and beard. He immediately realised that through those tears he must have reached this rank.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"The harp-playing saint attained a special rank.
Blessed! O holder of mysterious secret, Blessed!"

The same theme is expressed by the author of *"Gulzaare Ibraheem"*

"The wife of Nabi Loot was an unbeliever
While the wife of Firaun was a believer.
He brought forth from a temple of idols, a Siddeeq

And in the Kaaba was born a Zindeeq (Abu Jahl).
The son of Azar (i.e. Ibrahim (A.S.)) was the friend of Allah
And Kan'aan, son of Nooh, was gone astray."

The Khalifa, Hazrat Umar ﵁, respectfully remained standing in front of the grave for Pir Changi (R.A.) to wake up, so that he could give him the glad tidings of Salaam from Allah. While standing there Hazrat Umar ﵁ sneezed and Pir Changi (R.A.) opened his eyes. On seeing the Ameerul Mumineen he became filled with fear, so much so that he began trembling. He feared that Sayedina Umar ﵁ would punish him, because of the musical instrument that was lying next to him. During that time it was well known that Hazrat Umar ﵁ used to beat up with his stick the wrong-doers, for committing wrongs. However, when Hazrat Umar ﵁ saw Pir Changi (R.A.) was trembling in fear, he said to him: *"Fear not, I have come to you to bring to you glad tidings from your Lord."*

He said:
"Why should the stick of Farouq fall on him,
Him who cries before the Lord?
Allah has inspired unto me
And informed me of your name
And He has showed to me your high rank
So that I can come to you at your place
And He has told me to inform you:
'I have chosen you, O fortunate one'
And he has ordered me to take from the Treasury
Some money to hand to you."

When Hazrat Umar ﵁ had informed Pir Changi (R.A.) of Allah's special gifts and favours to him, Pir Changi (R.A.) was filled with gratitude and sorrow.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:
"When Pir Changi (R.A.) had heard of Allah's bounty and gifts from the mouth of Sayedina Umar ﵁,

He began trembling in gratitude and sorrow.
And began to bite his own hands in anger.
Thinking of his erstwhile negligence he cried:
'O Allah, without likeness; seeing Your mercy and bounty,
I am filled with shame at Your favour.'
He cried and in anger threw the harp down, breaking it into pieces
And said to it: 'You have deprived me of Allah's Love
And have led me astray from the path of truth.
For seventy years you drank my blood
And for that time have I sinned and been unmindful.
Till I have now become an old man
And through you my face has been black in Allah's sight."

Sayeduna Umar رضي الله عنه observed all this and it affected him so deeply that tears came to his eyes. He said: *"O Man, this crying and weeping of yours is a sign of your intelligence. Your life is enlightened through your nearness to Allah. Verily the tears of sinners are very valuable in the sight of Allah."*

"Allah equates the tears of sorrow and grief from the eyes of a sinner
With the blood emanating from a martyr."

Through the company of Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه and his blessings, Pir Changi (R.A.) became an eminent Shaikh of Tariqat and entered the ranks of the Awliyaa Allah (saints of Allah).

LESSON

This story teaches us that a person should never lose hope in Allah over his misfortunes. One should at all times have hope in Allah. The story also teaches us that all other connections, except connections with Allah, are temporary and transitory. No faithfulness remain in these conditions. Only Allah is at all times prepared to accept His bondsmen. However, the Love and contact which is solely for Allah's sake, is also included in the Love for Allah.

THE STORY OF THE HERDSMAN AND NABI MOOSA (A.S.)

During the time of Nabi Moosa (A.S.) there was a *"majzoob"* herdsman who filled with Divine Love, was busy grazing his sheep and goats in the mountainous pastures away from men. In the mountains he used to cry out distressed in his Love for Allah, praying thus:

"O Allah, where will You meet me? If You should meet me, I will become your servant, mend Your clothes, comb Your hair and if ever You should become sick, I would console You. O Allah, if I should see Your home, I will bring milk and ghee to You by day and night. I will kiss Your hands and massage Your legs. When Your time for sleeping comes along, I will sweep clean Your sleeping place. O Allah, all my sheep are sacrificed for You. O Allah, whatever words I speak regarding my sheep and goats, I am actually uttering them in longing love for You. The sheep is just an alibi."

So actually the herdsman, in the troubled state of his excessive love for Allah, was opening his heart as I have further mentioned in my urdu Mathnavi * (Hakim Akhtar).

"This is the story of a herdsman
In the time of Nabi Moosa (A.S.).
In a sincere search for his Lord,
While on the fringe of the desert plains
And while weeping sadly and distressed
With burning Divine Love from within.
One day the herdsman, while remembering his Beloved
Was crying in prayer before Him:
'O Lord of both worlds,
How can I meet You and where?
Show me some sign of the meeting place
Where I can meet You, O King of the Universe.
My heart will not experience any quiet

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* Volume two of this book.

For as long as I do not find your address.
Every Rose Garden is a thorn bush without You.
Life is a fire without You.
Without You, the beautiful voice of the nightingale,
Sounds like the cries of the crow in our ears.
This earth, sun and the moon,
This Rose Garden, this desert, land and sea
Are all no pleasures to me without You.
How can I live without You?
Should I meet you, O Lord,
I would press Your legs and hands every day.
I would give You bread to eat.
I would give You milk to drink every morning and evening.
I would give You milk of my.goats to drink,
O Lord of all men."

The herdsman was opening his heart to Allah with these words of love when suddenly Nabi Moosa (A.S.) happened to pass by that way and as he heard the words he said: *"O Herdsman, do you think Allah stands in need of a servant? Does He have a head so that you can comb His hair? Does he become hungry so that you could give Him goat's milk to drink? Does He become sick so that you could sympathetically treat him? O Ignorant One! Allah is free of all faults and needs. Quickly, repent! Your words are words of blasphemy. Allah is utterly not in need of any of your services."*

When the herdsman heard these words of Nabi Moosa (A.S.) he became ashamed of himself. In fear and sorrowful distress, he tore his clothes and started crying bitterly, fleeing towards the desert. Then Allah sent revelation to Nabi Moosa (A.S.):

"O Moosa, why have you chased my bondsman from me?
I have sent you to join them to me, not remove them from me."

Mathnavi Akhtar:

Revelation came to Moosa (A.S.) from Allah,

"Why did you remove My bondsman from Me?
Proper etiquette is for those endowed with wisdom.
But how can the sigh of the herdsman be with wisdom.
He whose clothes are torn through Divine Love,
His clothes are not mended by truth.
Which way did My beloved flee?
Where has My mad lover gone?
Even though love has no reason and discretion,
And even though outwardly his words appeared uncouth,
But from inside his heart was clean.
Although outwardly he spoke words disrespectful,
But in meaning they were words of love and spirit.
With his words of one drunk with madness,
He was searching for the Court of Greatness."

LESSON

The lesson from this story is that, at the time of admonishing or advising someone, one should remember that the person you are admonishing could possibly be one who is accepted in Allah's sight. Thus some persons may be truly sincere lovers of Allah and as such may be disrespectful and blasphemous. This may be as a result of their overwhelming love and is in actual fact not disrespectful, although to outsiders that is how it may appear.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:
"The conversation of the lover of God towards Him
Which comes out of the heart of love, is not void of respect."

Hence, at the time of admonishing and advising, one should be moderate. It should not be done with so much of harshness and in such a punishing manner that the person loses hope. However, in the case before us, Nabi Moosa (A.S.), because of being a courier of Shariat, it was necessary for him to show the herdsman where he had gone wrong. Allah's rebuke to Nabi Moosa (A.S.) was not for the purpose of forbidding him from showing the right path. It was more to show him the correct manner of giving advise. For this reason it would be wrong for ignorant Soofis to object against the teachings of the Ulama-e-Haq. Neither should they consider themselves above the Ulama. The Ulama have a very high position in Allah's sight.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT LUQMAN (A.S.)

Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) used to be in the employ of a rich man. Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) had such great love for Allah and contact with Him, that it created within him high moral character and exemplary habits. This was a clear sign of his nobility and nearness to Allah. The details of that is described in Surah Luqman in the Quran Sharif.

The nobility of Luqman's (A.S.) character had a great effect on his master, so much so that the master considered him as a great friend and a beloved companion. Although he was the master, yet in fact the master became like a slave to his employee.

"It is the miracle of love that the King became a slave of his beloved". It then became the practice of the master that whenever he had something special to eat, he would first feed Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) of it and after Luqman (A.S.) had filled himself, he would eat the left-overs. Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) would consider the love of the master and his habit so he would eat moderately and send what was left over to the master.

One day, during the melon season, the master received a melon from somewhere. At that time Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) was not present. The master sent one of his slaves to go and call him. When Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) arrived, the master cut the melon into slices and slice by slice started giving thereof to Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) to eat. As he ate the slices, the master inwardly became pleased at the effect his love was having upon Hazrat Luqman (A.S.).

Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) ate the slices of melon with great pleasure and all the time expressed thanks for the favour shown to him by the master. After having eaten the slices, when just one slice remained, the master said: *"Let me eat this slice and see how sweet is this melon"*. Saying this, he put the slice into his mouth. Immediately such bitterness spread from the tip of his tongue down to his throat, that as a result of the bitterness of the melon, he fell down unconscious and remained unconscious for a whole hour.

When he regained consciousness, he questioned Hazrat Luqman (A.S.): *"O Beloved one, how did you manage to so heartily eat those slices of melon? Just one slice of the melon had such an effect on me, how did you manage to eat so many slices?"*

Hazrat Luqman (A.S.) replied: *"Khwaja Saheb, from your hands I have received hundreds of gifts. The burden of thanks upon me is so great that my back has gone crooked. Hence, I felt ashamed that the hand that had granted me so much favours, if one day some distastefulness or bitterness should come, how can I turn away from it? O Khwaja Saheb, the pleasure of knowing that it comes from your hands has changed the bitterness of the melon to sweetness"*

LESSON

My spiritual mentor, Moulana Shah Phulpoori (R.A.) (May Allah fill his resting place with Noor) used to relate this story with great pleasure and used to repeat the last couplet. While relating this story he used to advise thus: *"At every given moment there are numerous bounties and favours of Allah upon men. But if ever for a moment some such incident takes place which brings with it a problem and outwardly causes some difficulty, man loses patience and fails to be grateful. On the other hand, there are those to whom through the blessings and the company of the Saintly ones, Allah has granted a good understanding of deeni affairs, so that when sorrows and difficulties touches them, they remain happy and pleased with their*

Lord. At such times, they draw strength from their good understanding of deen and realise that this world is like a hospital and we are all like patients in it. There are times when the doctor gives the patient medicine like "halwa-e-badaam" (sweet medicine) to eat and at other times feeds them "chara-ita" and "Ghuloo-e-neb" which are very bitter. However, in both of these there are beneficial results for the patient. Similarly, Allah is the "Al-Hakeem", the All-Wise and at the same time is the "Haakim"-Ruler. He is also the "Al-Raheem", the Merciful One. Hence, whatever conditions are to befall us in accordance with Allah's pre-determination, whether it brings out comfort or discomfort, all these are for our benefit and in our interest.

The Hadith teaches us that for some bondsmen, a high rank has been determined. But sometimes, that bondsman has not acquired the good deeds to reach to such a high rank. Hence Allah causes him to become involved with some calamity, which if he accepts and bears patiently, he is able to reach that high position.

Another Hadith says: *"A believer is touched by fever and (while he suffers in this fever) his sins drop off from him just like leaves fall off from the trees in autumn."*

Another Hadith says: *"A thorn pricks a believer and he receives reward for it."*

Yet Another Hadith says: *"On the day of Qiyamat when, in return for having suffered patiently in the face of calamities and misfortunes, rewards will be handed out, then every person who suffered calamities will wish that his skin had been cut to pieces with a scissors, then what a grand reward he would have received on that day."*

Hence, a Mumin (believer) should remain pleased in times of misfortunes. In other words, there should be no complaints or objections from his tongue. He should at all times seek Allah's pardon and forgiveness for sins and pray for safety from calamities: *"O Allah, we are weak and do not possess the patience to bear the difficulty of calamities. Please, in Your Infinite Mercy, change* *the calamity to the safety of Your pardon".*

We have been prohibited from praying for calamities and have been commanded to pray for safety and pardon. If we pray for calamities and misfortunes, it would be a sign from us of our bravery, while praying for safety and pardon are signs of our admission of weakness, which is liked by Allah.

"O people, discard your show of strength and power.
Adopt an attitude of crying and weeping before Allah,
As Allah's mercy is directed towards crying in weakness.
Cry to Allah in humility so that you become cheerful and happy.
So that without the smile on your lips
You remain so happy within your heart (with Allah)
That thousands of smiles may be sacrificed for such cheerfulness of the heart."

If at all times there is safety and comfort then a person's temperament which inclines towards worship of Allah, will move away from steadfastness. Without calamities and misfortunes a feeling of humility and weakness is not created in a person.

In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah is reported to say: *"I am with those of broken hearts."*

"Sabar" (Patience) causes the hearts to be broken as it is bitter. A person suffering from sorrow or in desperate need calls upon Allah in humility crying and weeping. Can a person making duah to Allah while in ease and comfort compare with him? The former person is in such a calamity which causes him to become nearer to Allah and develops a strong bond with Allah.

"The contact with him increased even further
The enmity of the creation became the cause of mercy"

A certain saintly man said: "While suffering in sorrow, the way towards Allah is traversed speedily." This is due to the fact that through sorrows and misfortunes, a feeling of weakness, humility and affliction is created in the heart. At such times Allah's special communion is experienced.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ

"Allah says: "Verily Allah is with those who patiently persevere."

This theme has been very well expressed by Hazrat Asghar Khaundwy (R.A.):

"If You are sharing this grief of mine,
Then why should I grieve over that grief"

The conclusion to this discussion is that the life of this world consists but of a few days. Whether these days are of ease and comfort or whether the days are of calamities and misfortunes, they all shall shortly pass away. Hence, neither should one become overjoyed at the conditions of ease and comfort, nor complain and object in cases of difficulties and calamities. At times of ease and comfort gratitude should be expressed while in times of difficulties and calamities, there should be patience, acceptance and surrender. If a person keeps the aims and objectives of life in front of him, then he has found the solution for all problems. The main aim of this life is to attain the pleasure of Allah. That pleasure is only attained by following His path and obeying the law as indicated by Him, to repent for all shortcomings and sins and to seek forgiveness for faults committed. Thus if a person follows the Sunnah, then whether conditions of ease or conditions of calamity prevails, both these sets of conditions hold within them the means and way towards Allah's pleasure. On the other hand, if one is not a follower of the Sunnah, then the conditions of ease are of no benefit.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) has said, "Calamities and difficulties come over sinners as well as the righteous ones. The calamity can be a punishment for evil deeds or a means of gaining more closeness to Allah Taala and an elevation of the rank of a person. Now how would one make out the difference that it is a blessing or punishment ? That the person is a righteous or sinful one ? The person that follows the sunnat even in the time of calamities, feels love for Allah, finds pleasure in Allah's decisions, gains more closeness of Allah and more humility, is a righteous one. On the other hand the calamities which create in the heart of a person feelings of darkness, solitude and a feeling of being far from Allah and through which a person does not feel inclined towards repentance and humility before Him, in fact finds rejection and complains of Allah; then you may understand that this misfortune is a punishment for evil deeds committed. In Surah Noor, the blessings of seeking forgiveness (istighfaar) are enumerated. Through it, Allah sends down rain, grants beautiful gardens and grants blessings in one's children.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"When you experience sorrow in the heart, turn towards Istigfaar,
Sorrow comes through Allah's command,
So neglect not good deeds, but in fact increase therein.
When Allah wishes to shower His mercy on us,
He creates in us the ability to incline towards weeping in humility."

Moulana Thanwy (R.A.) says that he had a problem for some time, understanding that Allah grants some devotees certain high ranks through their spiritual efforts and exercises (mujahadah). However, He also grants to others the same favour without them making any strenuous spiritual effort. So how is it logical that His Mercy should tolerate, that a true lover of His should subject himself to such strenuous ordeals.

Moulana Thanwy (R.A.) struggled for quite some time to find a solution to this problem. He says that one day the solution dawned upon him. The answer was that if, without Mujahada (effort), all the stages and ranks were accessible to the devotees (Saalik) then there would be no appreciation for Allah's bounties (ne'mats). Hence if there was no appreciation for these ne'mats, then there would be no continuation and progress of such ne'mats. Just as there is an increase of bounties through gratitude, as described in the Holy Quran, likewise there is a loss of bounties in cases where gratitude is missing.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Why should the King of all intellect,
Who is all Merciful, command such strenuous Mujahadah?"

Then Moulana (R.A.) answers:

"Without Mujahadah no light of the truth is created in the heart
Which is perceived through true faith and Divine communion.
If that perception was possible through reason alone,
Then there was no need for putting the self to such strenuous exercises."

Moulana says: *"The amount of crying in humility and repentance, a person does in times of sorrow and pressing need, is much more than is possible in times of ease and comfort. In spite of that, a person should not wish for, nor look forward to calamities. What he should seek is safety from evil, happiness and prosperity. But if, from Allah's side some sorrow and calamity does befall one, one should not then become distressed and lose patience. Instead one should understand that it is Allah's intention to make and formulate you and through this formulation to increase and raise you in rank. Sorrow and calamities are also bounties (nee'mat) from Allah and in times of need the duahs come right from the heart, the place of prostration becomes wet with tears and one experiences the pleasure of supplication, which in itself is a great nee'mat.*

"In praying to Allah the Lovers have no other objective
Than to have the pleasure of whispering secretly in communion with Him."

This secret talk is attained at the time of sorrow and weeping and these sighs of crying and lamentation in His presence is well loved by Him.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"I cry and weep before my Beloved, for that appears well pleasing to Him

And in both worlds our crying and sorrowful sighs are loved by Him.
Blessed is that eye that cries in the remembrance of the Beloved
And blessed is that heart that is embroiled in His love.
For as long as the babe does not cry, milk does not flow forth from mother's breast
And as long as clouds don't shed raindrops, the garden does not become green.
From the 'crying' of the clouds, the garden becomes green and fertile
And as much as the candle 'cries', so much it increases its light.
There where the tears flow, mercy prevails
And where water flows, greenery and fertility prevail.
Allah equates the tears of the sinner in grief
To the blood flowing from a martyr.
Crying and weeping is a great wealth
And the Mercy of Allah is a great blessing.
The wealth of this world consists of gold and silver.
The capital in Allah's sight is Love and two crying eyes."

One Saintly person said:

"O Beloved, for the eyes to stay awake for anyone save You, is a waste
And to cry over anyone's parting save Yours, is useless!"

Although it is bitter to bear calamities and misfortunes with patience, it is still a wonderful medicine that brightens the devotee. The high ranks which were unattainable through years of spiritual exercises and rigours, are speedily attained through patient perseverance. For this reason, it is essential that every devotee (saalik) should consider the bitterness of patience as being sweet in view of the great bounty attainable through it. It will only be a few days of difficulty and hardship. Thereafter it will be smiles and laughing all the way. One gives only half a life in the effort but in exchange for this half, the Great Giver of bounty grants numerous lives.

"He grants so may bounties through suffering patiently
Such bounties which has not entered your mind,
Such is the blessing of patience.
Thousands of medicine has Allah created
But one such as patience,
Adam and his children have not seen.
Whoever has adopted patience
Has in fact acquired the high rank of the Siddeeq.
The Prophet ﷺ has said that Allah does not even grant Imaan
To that one in whose temperament there is no patience.
Hazrat Ayoob (A.S.) for seven years remained patient
And pleased with Allah's guests (the worms on his body)."

It is related that when Hazrat Ayoob (A.S.) was saved from this calamity and became healed, someone asked him: *"Hazrat, when were you more pleased? Was it at the time when you were suffering in this misfortune or at the time when you were healed of the calamity?"*

He replied: *"Thanks to Allah that he had granted me the bounty of good health. But during the time of this calamity, every morning and evening, the special voice which reached me from the unseen, asking me: "O Ayoob, How are you?" What pleasure and ecstasy was in that voice! It is such that numerous lives can be sacrificed for it. That asking after my well being was such that it made me forget all the misfortunes which I suffered. The heart now longs for that voice which has now stopped".*

When a person suffers sorrow and misfortune, he should most definitely not complain or utter any objections. This is most disrespectful. There is no objection in taking treatment or complaining of pain in the body. The lover of Allah should not, however, object to or have aversions of Allah who sends the calamity.

"Because sorrow and comfort are handed out by Allah,
Hence complaints and objections are disrespectful and Kufr."

It is essential that a slave and a bondsman should at all times be satisfied with what the Master decides, as the Master is in full control and can do as he pleases.

Now I close this subject by quoting a few lines of poetry. May Allah make us His true bondsmen and grant us the ability to act in accordance with his pleasure

"When in Love the complaint of the beloved is not appropriate.
For me there is no injustice in any of His actions.
Outwardly though it may be a calamity,
But it is in fact a blessing in disguised form.
That calamity in which there is goodness for us,
Is not really a punishment.
The love of the slaves of Allah cannot reach perfection
Until the blood of evil desires is not shed.
May that which is pleasing to You also become pleasing to me.
What would I do with that pleasure,
Which is not accompanied by Your pleasure
How can I say that the pain which is in my heart (of Your love)
Is not a gift of Yours.
He who is not blessed with this gift remains
Unaware of Your glory.
Do not rejoice over my tears of longing for Him,
When I am distanced from Him.
O you uninitiated in love, you have not as yet
Experienced the pain of deep hearted love.
Whosoever you witness giving his heart and soul to gold and silver.
O Akhtar, believe that he has not tasted
The sweetness of the love of Allah."

THE STORY OF THE SAINT IN THE MOUNTAIN

A certain dervish once went up a mountain pass and there made a promise to Allah: *"I am turning my back on all worldly connections. Now I shall remain here in solitude busy worshipping*

You. When I feel hungry, I shall wait for sustenance from Your side. I will not ask anything from any person. I will not pick any fruit of the trees of this mountain. But in the wind if any fruit falls from the trees, that I shall eat".

For some time he remained steadfast on this promise to the tests that came from Allah's side. The tests came along because in his vow, the dervish did not say: *'Insha-allah'* - if Allah so pleases. This omission of 'Insha-allah' gave a sign of the dervish's pride, arrogance and over-confidence in his own courage and ability. For this reason, the punishment for his deed involved him in a great test and the noor from his heart left him, so that the ability to bear the difficulties of hunger became lost. Allah ordered the wind not to blow in that part of the mountain. For five days, the wind failed to blow, as a result of which no fruit fell from the trees. The dervish suffered unbearable hunger. He could no more have patience and the hunger made him feel weak. He was forced now to break his promise to Allah. He began picking the fruit from the tree to eat. When that happened, Allah punished him, because it is a command of His:

"Carry out your promise."

This is what happened. A group of thieves came to hide along the foot of the mountain. Someone informed the Chief Police Officer of the town that a group of thieves were hiding in the mountain. Before the Police Officer could arrest the actual thieves, he saw the dervish and thought that he was one of them. Hence he immediately arrested him. The dervish made a big noise protesting his innocence and proclaimed that he was not a thief, but the Police Officer and the other soldiers did not listen to him. The punishment was that they cut off his right hand and his left foot.

At that time a traveller passed that way and when he saw what had happened, he scolded the Police Officer and the soldiers: *"You dogs, what have you done to this holy and saintly*

Dervish? He is a real saintly man and the abdaal of our era. He has broken away from the world to settle in solitude in the mountain".

When the Police Officer heard this, he began trembling in fear. In fear and with great grief and sorrow he came to the dervish with his bare head and feet, crying bitterly over the mistake that he had made, saying: *"I swear, I did not know that you were a saintly man. I made a mistake and considered you as one of the thieves. For Allah's sake, forgive me, otherwise I will become a victim of Allah's anger and will be destroyed."*

The dervish replied: *"Brother, it is not your fault. I am the guilty one. I broke my promise to my Lord and for that I have been given this punishment."*

"I know the cause of this and my inner self is aware thereof,
That for which sin of mine, this misfortune befell me.
I broke my agreement with Allah and as a result
The punishment for my deeds was the severing of·my hand and foot.
The sincere ones are at all times in danger,
In Allah's path, there are great tests awaiting them.
Such promises and vows should not be made which you cannot fulfil.
And sit not in places of danger where you are bound to be tested with trials."

LESSON

Firstly a person should never take an oath for anything which is against the Shariat e.g. *"I will not eat"* or *"I will not drink water"* etc. The oath of the dervish was of this type. Secondly, a person should never depend upon his own courage and strength. In all matters one should depend upon Allah and seek His help. If one intends doing anything, then one should always say: *'Insha-Allah'*. If for some reason, one forgets to say so, then the moment he remembers it he should say *'Insha-Allah'*. One must remember at all times that without Allah's power nothing can take place.

"Allah's one atom of favour is much better
Than a thousand efforts from the obedient ones.
Humility in the path of Allah and indigence
Is better than to be proud of our devotion and obedience."

One should, with steadfastness on the deen, pray to Allah at all times, *"O My Lord, do not leave me to my nafs for one moment. Rectify my condition in such a manner that at all times it is in accordance with Your pleasure, till You make my ending upon Imaan.*

Ameen.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT BILAL رضي الله عنه

Hazrat Bilal رضي الله عنه was an Abyssinian slave belonging to a Jew called Umayya Bin Khalaf. He embraced Islam in the early days of Islam, when the enemies of Islam did not allow the Muslims any restful moments. They tried every effort day and night to extinguish the Noor of Allah but Allah declared that He would complete that Noor, even though the non-believers were averse to it.

If Hazrat Bilal رضي الله عنه had wanted to, he could have kept his conversion to Islam a secret and thus have saved himself from persecution and injury. However, the Love for Allah within him forced him to openly proclaim the Kalima-e-Tawheed and to utter the cry of *"Ahad!Ahad!"*.

"When the Lover saw the dagger of Love in the hands of the Beloved,
Without fear and oblivious of danger he ran towards it.
And when the Lover saw the dagger aimed at him,
He felt it compulsory to offer his head towards the knife.
O truly Beloved, in Your remembrance Love seems good to me
And till Qiyamat I want to continue uttering this cry in madness.
When the self has claimed to be a wild duck,
Then when the storm of calamities descended what complaint could it have?"

This means that the wild duck is not afraid of the storm, but is able to overcome the ebb and flow of the waves of the storm. Similarly, the self of the Lover continues on its way along the route without being adversely affected by the storm of happenings.

Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ uttered the cry of *"Ahad! Ahad!"* till the anger of the Jew forced him to react with violence and he assaulted Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ in such a manner, that his body became filled with blood and injury. He made him lie down on the hot desert sand, saying to him: *"Now do not dare utter the cry of God's oneness!"*

Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ replied within himself:

"For the sake of Your Love the disbeliever wants to kill me and is shouting at me.
O Beloved, Come hither to the lowest heaven and see the show of Your Lover. What a show it is?"

One day Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ was passing that way and saw the blood soaked Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ crying out: "Ahad! Ahad!". On hearing this uttered cry, Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ stood still and perceived the love for the Divine Being and the ecstasy involved. Seeing Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ being persecuted to this extent, his heart became agitated and tears came to his eyes. He called Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ towards himself and advised him to utter Allah's name in solitude and not to utter it in the presence of his persecutor. Otherwise his persecutor would continue to unjustly persecute and punish him. Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ replied: *"O Honoured One, you are the Siddeeq of Rasulullah* ﷺ *I accept your advise and will act accordingly."*

The following day, Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ again happened to pass that way. Again he witnessed the same sight.Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ was again uttering the cry of *"Ahad! Ahad!"* while the Jew was terribly assaulting him until again his body became blood-stained. Seeing this, Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ was again filled with agitation and he advised Hazrat Bilal رضی اللہ عنہ: *"Brother, why do you utter 'Ahad' in the presence of this persecutor? Utter it silently and* *secretly within yourself". Hazrat Bilal* رضي الله عنه *replied: "I make toubah and in future will not act contrary to your advise."*

"O Foolish One, do not command the nightingale towards silence
For when it remembers the garden, its complaints will come on the lips."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"When Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه *advised him towards silence and secrecy, Bilal* رضي الله عنه *repented again,*
But when love overwhelmed, he swallowed the repentance.
It is the message of the troubled heart.
Without You there can be neither peace nor comfort."

Hazrat Bilal رضي الله عنه in spite of the numerous calamities of persecutions and pains, could not keep his love for Allah a secret and kept on openly uttering the cry of *"Ahad! Ahad!"*.

"When Love pulls the strings of its bow,
Many are the souls that become sold for a small price.
The body of Bilal was injured and blood-stained before the Jew,
But his soul was enjoying nearness to Allah in Divine Love, enjoying unending Spring."

This is what is called True Love. What a sad state of affairs that today people look at sensual love and call it love. That is not love. The love that comes from metaphorical beauty is not really *'ishq'*. It is *'fisq'* (transgression), which is caused by overeating. If a person has to go without food for a few days he will forget his love and ask for bread. But the Divine Love, because it is placed within the essence of man, even if no worldly needs are acquired, no change comes about in the Lover and his Love does not decrease. Love is actually a name for that kind of surrender that Allah, the truly Beloved is the Doer of everything and the servant is he who is pleased and satisfied with all that He does.

It is a fact that Allah loves seeing His servants in distressed conditions and their weeping and crying in sorrow to Him. At times, in spite of His numerous mercies and gifts, He sometimes delays in accepting their duahs, so that this sighing and crying before Him is not ended after their needs are met and so that they can continue to call on Him: *"Ya Allah! Ya Allah!"*

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Sometimes Allah delays in answering the prayers so that one may continue earnestly to call on Him and crying in humility. While it is done, He is aware thereof and He greatly approves thereof."

Hence, this delay in answering their prayers is for the bondsman a means towards His Mercy and not a sign of His rejection or of His considering the duah as being worthless. For a person to be able to speak secretly to Allah in his communion with Him, is indeed a great honour and a favour for the believer.

A person who has attained the love of Allah, will never be able to attain freedom from it. Now at this stage someone may come forth with an objection. It would appear from this that those who are true lovers of Allah are all the time in a great calamity and distress, instead of experiencing Allah's Mercy. This is the answer to the one who has such a perception. Actually that is how it will appear from afar. When looking at the outward features, it gives us a bloody appearance.

"From afar love seems like being bloody
So that insincere lovers do not tread this path.
This bloody appearance is a guard
Against insincere and half-baked lovers, not to come this way."

On the other hand, when one is endowed with true love, then the following is his description. He says:

"O Beloved, let it not be the good fortune of your enemy, to be destroyed by your sword,
May the heads of friends remain safe, for you to try your sword on them."

Imagine a certain lover who was pining for his beloved from whom he had been separated for ten years. He has turned pale, gone weak and sick. Now suddenly this beloved arrives and in an embrace presses him so hard that his ribs feel like breaking and his eyes appears to be popping out of their sockets. Noticing his discomfort, the beloved says: *"If you disapprove of this act of mine, I will discard contact with you and become intimate with someone else"*. Now, what answer will that lover give? If he is really a lover, he will answer thus:

"May my breath of life go out of me and fall at your feet.
That is the desire of my heart and longing".

Someone else, looking from afar and from the outside, will get the impression that this lover is experiencing great distress. But question the lover himself and he will explain what joy and pleasure he feels. He will look upon those moments as pleasurable moments and will wish that the time spent in them will be long. When that is the effect of sensual worldly love, then one can just imagine how much greater the ecstasy will be experienced when one has love for the true beloved, i.e. Allah.

From the above example, it should be understood that those people who have fallen prey to Divine Love, although outwardly they would appear to be in great distress and calamities, but inwardly they enjoy nearness to Allah and His Communion, which indeed provides them with great pleasure. Outwardly they may be dressed in tattered clothes, suffering hunger and starvation and be pale in the face, but inwardly they experience great peace, comfort and such joy as if it were experienced by Kings, who would then forget the pleasure of being in possession of a throne or a crown.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) quotes Allah as saying:

"This distressed one, covered in a quilt is My special bondsman,
Among thousands one such is born."

The main objective of this life for all creatures is to attain the love of Allah. This is the essential aim of life.

So Hazrat Bilal رضي الله عنه underwent and endured numerous difficulties and hardships because in his sight the reward for bearing them was great.

"For the sake of the love of my Beloved,
I am in love with suffering pain and sorrow."

Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, on numerous occasions, advised Hazrat Bilal رضي الله عنه but on every occasion when he passed that way, he saw the same picture – the Jew persecuting Bilal رضي الله عنه, who was all the time uttering: *"Ahad! Ahad!"*. Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه then went to Rasulullah ﷺ and related the story to him. When Rasulullah ﷺ heard the story he was filled with sorrow and tears flowed from his eyes. He asked: *"O Siddeeq! What is the solution to this problem? How can we save Bilal from this calamity?"*

Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه replied: *"Ya Rasulullah ﷺ, I shall buy Bilal رضي الله عنه"*. Rasulullah ﷺ said: *"All right! Let my share also be therein"*. Allahu Akbar! What good a fortune for Bilal رضي الله عنه that Rasulullah ﷺ himself also took part in purchasing him. In that black body of Hazrat Bilal رضي الله عنه was an enlightened heart, which was filled with Allah's love. Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه approached the Jew at a time when he was again busy beating Bilal رضي الله عنه. Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه questioned: *"Why are you beating this friend of Allah?"* The Jew replied: *"If you have so much sympathy for him, then bring the money and take him away as yours"*. Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه immediately responded: *"Take my white-skinned Jewish slave with the black heart and give me this black skinned slave with the enlightened heart from Abyssinia"*. Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه took Bilal and went to Rasulullah ﷺ. He asked: *"Ya Rasulullah ﷺ, what kind of transaction did I make? I gave away a white bodied, black hearted one and brought back a black body with an enlightened heart"*. Rasulullah ﷺ replied: *"You have made a very good sale, O Siddeeq"*.

Rasulullah ﷺ embraced Bilal رضي الله عنه and held him to his heart.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Mustapha embraced Bilal and held him against his chest.
The ecstasy Bilal felt! Who can ever imagine that?"

THE STORY OF SULTAN MAHMOOD AND AYAAZ

One day Sultan Mahmood called together the officials of his government with the aim of testing their intelligence. He took out a pearl from his treasury and first of all handed it to the Chief Minister and questioned him: *"What is the value of this pearl? How much can it be sold for?"* The Wazir replied: *"Sir, this pearl is of great value. It is more valuable than two hundred donkeys laden with gold"*. The King then ordered: *"I command you to crush this pearl into pieces"*. The Wazir replied: *"I will not destroy this valuable pearl. I have the welfare of your treasury at heart and to crush this valuable gem would amount to disrespect on my part"*. The King applauded this reply and rewarded him with a royal robe of honour.

The king then took the pearl from the Wazir and handed it to another of his court officials and asked him to determine what was the value of the pearl. He replied: *"Sir, this precious pearl is more valuable than half of your Kingdom. May God protect this pearl!"*. The King also commanded him to crush the pearl into small pieces. He replied: *"Sir, my hands cannot move to destroy this valuable pearl. To destroy this pearl would amount to enmity towards your treasury"*.The King praised him profusely for his reply and also rewarded him with a royal robe of honour.

In this manner, one by one the King called sixty five officials from his government and every one of them followed the example set by the Chief Minister.The King praised each one of them and also rewarded them with a royal robe of honour.

After he had tested all the officials, the King now called Ayaaz, handed the pearl to him and said: *"O Ayaaz, every one of my officials have seen the pearl. You also have a look at its radiant light and then tell me, what is its value?"* Ayaaz replied: *"Sir, whatever value I am going to mention, this pearl will be worth much more than that"*. The King ordered: *"Quickly, crush this valuable gem into pieces"*. Ayaaz knew the King's temperament and immediately realised that the King was putting him to a test. He broke the valuable pearl into small pieces and did not pay any attention towards receiving any royal robe as a reward. As he broke the pearl into pieces, all the officials began creating a loud noise so that in the King's Court a great commotion took place. The Minister of the State uttered: *"By Allah! This man is a disbeliever, an ungrateful one, showing no regard for a valuable gem belonging to you."*

Ayaaz replied: *"Respected brothers!, Is the command of the King more valuable or is this pearl more valuable? O people, in your sight the pearl is more valuable than the King's command. I will not remove my sight from the importance of the King's command and like a Mushrik turn towards the pearl. To remove my sight from the King and turn it towards the pearl means performing shirk in the love and obedience towards the King."*

Ayaaz said:

"Respected Sirs, is the command of the King more valuable or the pearl?
I shall not move my sight from the King and I will not turn my sight to the pearl like a Mushrik.
O You unworthy ones, the actual pearl was the King's command.
All of you broke down the pearl of the King's command."

When Ayaaz explained this secret to all the Ministers who were jealous of Ayaaz's closeness to the King, they became humiliated and disgraced by his understanding and success.

LESSON

In this story, we learn that the *"command comes before respect"*. It means that when a command was given by the King, the correct line of action was to obey the command. Ayaaz had personal love for Sultan Mahmood whereas the Ministers and courtiers had love for their own positions, ranks and wealth. The understanding and rational reasoning which Ayaaz displayed was an outflow of his love for Sultan Mahmood. This love teaches its own manner of *'adab'*. This true understanding and knowledge is not derived through the intellect. It is created out of love. Note that Shaytaan himself was a rational being and not a being filled with love. For this reason, he objected to the command of Allah the Ruler of all Rulers, whereas it would have been only proper that when an order came from Allah, it should have been immediately implemented. The result of his action was that he was banished from the Court of Allah. On the other hand, Nabee Adam (A.S.) and Hawa (A.S.) were lovers of Allah. When they committed a mistake, they did not feel any disgrace in admitting their fault to Allah. Together with admitting their fault before their Beloved, they busied themselves with gaining His pleasure, by shedding tears as they prayed for His pardon.

In this story there is a further lesson of the magnitude of the Divine Command which should be carried out without any hesitation. The relationship between Sultan Mahmood and Ayaaz was the relationship between Master and slave. Our relationship with Allah is even greater and deeper. Every atom of our bodies was created by Him, reared by Him and owned by Him. He has such an ownership over us wherein no one else shares with Him.

Muslims are commanded to perform Jehad. In Jehad we remember that the *"Kufaar"* (disbelievers) are also Allah's creation and Allah's bounties in rearing them is also provided for them just as it is provided for the believers.

"O Allah, You are so kind that from Your unseen treasury
You provide sustenance for the non-believers also."

But when a command is given to perform Jehad, it would be inappropriate to think about shedding of the blood of so many people for whose fostering and nourishment the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the East, the West, the South, the North, the air, the sea, the mountains, the services of thousands of machines, thousands of factory workers and labourers and thousands of animals were utilised. It would be wrong to consider the shedding of the blood of so many people for whose fostering, rearing and continued life on earth so much provision has been made by Allah that He had saddled the whole creation for their services. Now in Jehad, those very same people for whom so much provisions have been made, are being destroyed within minutes and seconds. Now in Jehad there will be no time for hesitation because now the Order of Allah has come and in the face of Allah's command the whole world has no value whatsoever. When the command from Allah comes, the demand is that the necks of the Kufaar (disbeliever) should be struck in Jehad for they are enemies of Allah fighting against the Believers.

"Without Shariat's command, it is a crime even to drink water
And when the fatwa of Jihad is sounded, it is obligatory to shed blood."

In this story, Moulana Rumi (R.A.) told us of one general law, through which a person can save his bondage from disobedience and from going astray. All those desires which are contrary to Allah's wishes, no matter how valuable, how pleasurable and how beautiful they may appear to us, the True Lover of Allah and the daring one should never act in accordance to those desires.In fact they should readily crush the pearl of their desires with the stone of Allah's commands. Neither should they cast an evil glance at a handsome beardless boy, nor at a strange woman even though there is danger of them losing their lives (first accidental gaze is forgiven).

THE STORY OF HAZRAT ZUN NOON MISRY (R.A.)

"How blessed that time when the heart is given to love.
No Istikhara is required for such a deed of righteousness."

How blessed is that time when Allah granted Hazrat Zun Noon Misry (R.A.) the pain and sorrow of His Love! A great agitation was created in the heart and he began weeping and lamenting. A little sorrow encountered through Allah's love is better than all the other nemats (bounties) of both the worlds. It is such a sorrow which sets one free from all other sorrows. It is also such a sickness which gives one safety from all other illnesses.

"Free from the sorrows of both worlds will you be quickly,
If one atom of sorrow from Allah's love touches you." (Akhtar)

The heart, which up to now had only been aware of the transitory worldly pleasures and which only reached up to this transitory world, now through the blessings of true Divine Love has flown up to the heavens and up to the Throne of Allah.

The true devotee of Allah, through the blessings of the special perception of communion with Allah, experiences within himself a wonderful feeling of contact with the hereafter and thus through this perception has only a nominal contact with this worldly existence. His major perception is the contact with the hereafter. My beloved Sheikh Hazrat Phulpuri (R.A.) used to explain his condition to his Sheikh Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) thus: *"Hazrat, it is as if I feel that I am not walking upon the ground of this world, but upon the floor of the hereafter. Being busy with worldly things does not prevent me from keeping the hereafter before me."*

In reality this is what actually happens when the heart develops a strong bond with Allah. Sometimes it also happens that for the special devotees of Allah, special favours are sent from the unseen world. The moments of these special favours are such that words cannot describe them. Only the soul of the person, on whom those special favours descend, can know them and enjoy the pleasures thereof.

Through the Divine Love, a strange condition came over Hazrat Zun Noon Misry (R.A.). Hazrat Rumi (R.A.) says that he was overtaken by such a feeling of madness and confusion that his sighs and utterances caused people to become greatly affected by it. It seemed that Divine Love brought nothing but crying and sorrow and as if there was nothing good in it.

"Through crying and lamenting, the way towards Allah is easily traversed
And so nearness is attained which is not reached through years of striving through spiritual exercises."

The overwhelming nature of his love was such that from the sighs and cries that he uttered people became helpless. Hence a group of irreligious people had him imprisoned in jail. When they took him to jail, he went willingly and happily. Some of his closest friends accompanied him in sympathy. When they locked the door behind him, the friends began to wonder: *"What has happened? Such a great Sheikh has been imprisoned."*

It seemed as if the Sheikh himself was hiding the inner condition under a cloud of madness. It may be that in order to avoid the vileness of people, he preferred himself going to jail.Possibly it may be that he had become fed up with the company of rational beings and presented himself as a mad one.

Hence, all those friends who visited him in the jail, said to him: *"Respected Sir, we all are your sincere friends and companions. We have come here to inquire about your health and condition. We are surprised and astounded as to who could have laid a charge of insanity against you. We look upon you as the very embodiment of sanity. These people who only look at the external appearances are completely unacquainted with your high position and rank of the nearness to Allah. They regard you as being insane, while we know that you are a True Lover of God. We are your sincere friends and lovers. We look upon you as our beloved one in both the worlds. Please inform us the reason why you prefer to waste your time in this prison. Please do not keep the secret from us."*

Sheikh Zun Noon (R.A.) listened to their words and was not convinced by their sincerity. Hence to test their sincerity he picked up some stones and moved towards them. Like a mad man he ran in their direction as if he was going to stone them. When they saw this they all fled, fearing of being hurt by the stones. Seeing this the Sheikh laughed at their claim of love and sincere friendship and exclaimed: *"Have a look at these friends of the dervish; O You ignorant ones. What do you know of love and true friendship?"*

"When does a friend keep himself aloof from the sorrow's of a friend?
The friendship of a friend is like a skin around him and he will bear all sorrows from his friend.
A friend is like gold and calamities and misfortunes are like fire.
And pure gold shines even brighter when the heat of fire touches it."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"O You, when with one wound you retired from your love,
Choosing the way of those who flee.
It is clear you have not yet been touched by love,
And only mention it."

In other words, the path of true love is not an easy one to tread. You will have to shed blood from your heart and your liver. Then the path will open up to you.

Hence, one should tread the path of Allah in a manly way. A modern day saintly man - Babu Saheb, who was also a Khalifa of Moulana Thanwy (R.A.) said: *"Accept and then resolve.In other words - first, make a strong contact of love with Allah and then resolve to bear all the trials that will come your way while on that path"*. For the sake of worldly business and employment a person will bear all kinds of calamities. But this is an affair of the hereafter, for which a person should be prepared to bear even greater burdens.

THE STORY ABOUT A CURE FOR SENSUAL LOVE

A certain devotee resided in the company of a saintly man for the sake of improving and rectifying his spiritual life. He diligently applied himself to the Zikr and deeds which the Sheikh prescribed for him. However there was one maid servant of the Sheikh who brought the food to them from the Sheikh's house. By continuously looking at her as she brought the food, his heart became filled with love for her. Thus whenever she brought the food, he cast lustful glances at her, instead of looking at the food.

The maid servant was also a devotee seeking for Allah. She soon realised that this man was casting lustful glances at her. Her enlightened heart perceived the lustful glances and thus she went to complain to the Sheikh: *"Sire, a certain Mureed of yours is involved with lustful love. What benefit will there be for him from your prescribed Zikr and spiritual exercises? You should first cure him of this figurative love."*

It is the practice of the saintly ones, as far as possible, that they do not expose or humiliate their companions nor those connected with them, so that these people do not loose heart through their disappointment. As the Sheikh is devoted to Allah, his sights are directed at Allah's grace and bounties:

"When Allah's Mercy comes pouring forth,
The fire worshipper of a hundred years
Can become the pride of all Saints.
Do not despise any disbeliever.
Who knows when Allah's Mercy may take him?
It is possible that before death overtakes,
The Kaafir and the Mushrik can become Bayazid (one saintly one)
This can happen within a blink of the eye."

Hence the Sheikh, in spite of knowing the secret, did not scold the Mureed and refrained from exposing him. However, within himself he was thinking of a way to cure him of this lustful love.

It so happened that from Allah's side he was inspired with a plan and he acted upon it. He gave the maid servant some laxative which caused her acute diarrhoea. He also instructed her to let the faeces that came out of her accumulate in one bucket.

Due to the purgative she had taken, she defecated about twenty times until she became very weak and thin. Her face became exceedingly pale and her eyes and cheeks turned hollow. Her face appeared frightful like one suffering from cholera. She appeared very unattractive and all her beauty had vanished. The Sheikh then told her: *"Take his food to him today and then quietly stand there."*

When the Mureed saw the maid servant, instead of looking at her, he now turned his eyes away and told her: *"Put the food down"*. As he uttered these words the Sheikh entered in the room and said: *"O you fool, why is it that today you turn your eyes away from this girl? What is missing from her today that your love for her has vanished?"*

Then the Sheikh instructed the girl to bring the container in which all the faeces has been collected. When she placed it before him, the Sheikh said to the Mureed: *"O foolish one, apart from those faeces, nothing else was extracted from this girl. From this it seems that in actual fact you were in love with these faeces and now that it has gone out of her body, your love is also gone".*

MATHNAVI-E-AKHTAR:

"What has become deficient in the body of this maid servant
That you notice to make you turn away in disappointment?
What has departed from her body that you now experience aversion to her?
The Sheikh then showed the container
Which had become filled with the girl's faeces
And said: "Look at it, O Seeker!
It is only this which had left her body.
Thus your beloved, in fact was these faeces.
It is over this thing that you became a mad man.
And now that through the purgative she has become weak and pale.
The love that you felt has vanished and is gone."

The Sheikh asked the Mureed: *"Tell me, if you really loved this girl then how is it that this love has now turned to dislike and aversion?"*

Through this plan of the Sheikh, it soon dawned upon the Mureed that he had become involved with sensual love. He became ashamed of it and in sorrow and lamentations, he repented to Allah. Through this repentance and sorrow he was eventually endowed with true Divine Love.

Hazrat Moulana Rumi (R.A.) drew this advise from the story: *"O people, today you fall in love with a well-musk-scented one with curly locks of hair. One day that same lock of hair will appear worse to you than the tail of an old donkey."*

"Those very eyes that cause you to become intoxicated
And for which you are prepared to sacrifice your life,
In old age will have dirty water dripping from them.
Look at a beautiful child who through his beauty becomes Master among men
But look when old age overtakes him, he becomes worthless among men.
Look how lovely and fresh the sun appears at the time of rising,
But remember its death at the time of setting.
See how splendid the moon appears on the fourteenth night,
But check how is its sorrowful state as it begins to wane.
O Man, you are in love with good food and fine outward form,
But see the result thereof in the toilet afterwards.
The people of this world, like the world are truly unfaithful.
When it turns its face towards you, then know it is not the face,
It is merely the back of the head.
Now that you have come to know the unfaithfulness of the world and worldly people,
Then establish love contact with the saints of Allah and with no other beings except them."

A sign of being accepted by Allah is to sit in the company of the friends of Allah and become disconnected from the worldly things. When being inclined towards Allah, one must be outwardly a follower of the Sunnat and at the same time seek the company of a saintly one, who also follows the Sunnat. After attaining this virtue, one should never seek miracles from them because miracles and Kashf are involuntary occurrences. Such involuntary occurrences have nothing to do with being accepted or not by Allah. Miracles are not a sign of being Allah's chosen one or not. Allah has not placed the criterion for acceptance by Him or nearness to Him on involuntary matters. Regarding the despicable and transitory nature of illusory beauty, I have written a poem entitled: "*Word of warning regarding sensual love*" and for the benefit of readers I quote it here. May Allah accept it and make it beneficial for all men.

A WORD OF WARNING REGARDING SENSUAL LOVE

(by Hakim Akhtar)

That troublesome curling lock which caused sedition in youth,
Has transformed into the tail of a donkey in this perishable abode, in old age.
That coquetry glance, which was notorious in shedding the blood (of lovers),
In old age has become too helpless to have any care for itself.
O heart! Step carefully, in the spring of perishing beauty,
Thousands of love-boats have sunk in the sea of youth.
Falling in love with perishable beauty is our spiritual death,
It is in safeguarding one's heart wherein lies the secret of eternal life.
Ah! That cheek which was the envy of a hundred gardens in youth,
Now due to old age, it has become a disgrace to a hundred autumns, in this perishing garden.
Those eyebrows and eyelashes that had become an altar for the lovers yesterday,

Now due to old age, they are like the eyelashes of a donkey, with
flowing matter discharging from them.
That sweetheart of beauty who yesterday ruled the kings,
Today, due to old age, there is rebellion in her kingdom.
That glowing countenance which was being adorned by a volunteer
love,
Because of its declined beauty, is ashamed of its admiration.
That pride of charm which, until yesterday, was the adornment of
Poetry and Literature,
Why is it, that now, in old age it is subjected to criticism?
Now where is the veil of 'howdah' (of camel) and that deep sigh of
separation?
That idolised doll is being humiliated in the dust of camel driving.
The charms of a young beauty is the dawn of a rose garden,
But look at the end of this rose garden in the eve of gardening.
That essence of the sweet love of lovers, and that inspiration for the
love-song composition,
In old age has been reduced to a withering rose in the spring of the
Poet's meeting.
Thousands of Beauties portraits are buried in tombs
Yet the fools (lovers) are still subjected to vain imagination.
If there is any true love, then it is the eternal love of the ever-living
Lord,
The love of a perishing beauty is always a temporary one.
O Akthar do not be deceived by any charms of this Universe,
Rather remain in love with (Allah) the Creator of the Universe in
this temporary world.

LESSON

The lesson of the story is this: The seeker after Allah (the Mureed) became involved in sensual love and would not have found a way out of it. However, a saintly person's company saved him. Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says about this: The path towards

Allah does not reach Him through reason alone. One will have to seek the company of saintly beings with whom one should reside with the intention of self-rectification and reformation. If one is going to avoid being obedient to those saintly beings, then one will at all times remain imperfect and will never be able to achieve complete results. Thus in this way Abu Ali Sina, who was the Master of the Philosophies, at the time of his death considered. *'Reason'* as being of no benefit, calling it as being without benefit. He admitted that *"we have ridden the horses of intellect and Reason in vain and having been deceived by the Reason and intellect, avoided the obedience and guidance of the saints of Allah and so continued to swim about in an imaginary world"*.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: "It is completely useless to swim about in the sea of Reason and intellect. There is need for the ship of Nabi Nooh (A.S.) - i.e. The help of the friends of Allah. Look how Nabi Nooh's (A.S.) son - Kan'aan depended on Reason alone saying: *"The high mountains shall save me from this storm"*. He considered the ark of Nabi Nooh (A.S.) as being despicable. The result was that the ship was saved during the deluge and reached the high mountain while Kan'aan was drowned.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: "When you do not look with proper sight, then you look upon the love and company of the saintly ones and their obedience i.e. their ship as despicable, and you look upon your imitation of the people of Europe as the high mountains of Intellect and Reason. But, beware, do not look upon this ship as being of no value and a thing to be despised. It is true that the Ah-lullah, the saints are usually dressed in old and tattered clothes and live simple lives, but do not look at the simplicity of their lives and consider them lowly and despicable. Instead look at the Grace of Allah that is with them. Look at the splendour of the one who arrives through the ship and do not look at the heights of the mountains of Reason.

The power of Allah is such that with one wave, He can turn the ship upside down. But the ship which travels in the shadow of Allah's Mercy, in spite of its outward weakness and the evil intention of Shaytaan, it will pass through all the trials in safety. If one is not going to follow this advise, then in the end one will have to admit the shortcomings of the intellect.

Hence, if a person needs to find safety from faults and sins, he will have to become closely connected in love with the saints of Allah. Then he will not suffer losses. People who wish to travel on the path of deen with only reason are breakers of their '*tobah*'. When Shaytaan gives one blow in their direction, their 'tobah' is broken down. Yet their arrogance is such that they look down upon the saints of Allah. Such people remain imperfect throughout their lives. So, O People! Seek for yourself a way towards Allah and consider the company of the saints as medicine.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT SHAH ABUL-HASAN KHARQANI (R.A.)

Once a true dervish (seeker after truth) undertook a long journey from Taliqaan to Khaarqaan in order to pay a visit to Hazrat Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (R.A.). Along this journey he had to cross many mountains and valleys. Along the way he bore great difficulties like thirst, but he endured all that patiently for the sake of his love. In this dervish there was such restlessness and longing for divine love that it forced him to take up this journey. Such is the way of love. What happens in the case of Divine Love? It has a different effect upon different people.

"What word did you utter in the ear of the flower
That it now laughs in pleasure.
And what did you mention to the nightingale
That now through the pains of love it weeps and laments?"

My Sheikh Moulana Phulpoori (R.A.) used to tell me a story about a great Majzoob Soofi who used to live somewhere in the rural district. The condition of *'Qabz'* descended on him from Allah`s side. In the technical terms *'Qabz'* is such a condition which the Soofi feels when he experiences spiritual inactivity, non-progress, depression and a lessening in the presence of Allah. His heart feels no joy in ibaadah and it seems as if there is no pleasure derived from Zikr. This condition is sent over to a devotee with the sole purpose of a spiritual training towards the acquisition of his spiritual progress. If the devotee should at all times enjoy the feeling of Allah's nearness, then there is the possibility of pride and arrogance being created within him which could be the cause of his spiritual destruction. Allah dislikes all sins from His bondsmen but the most hated characteristic that He disapproves from them is that of pride and arrogance.

Hence, the experience of *'Qabz'* brings the devotee towards humility which in Allah's sight is a very well-liked characteristic. Man is a bondsman (slave) of Allah, an *'abd'*. In the word *'abd'*, the meaning of humility and distressed state are included. Hence for someone to be an *'abd'* slave of Allah and at the same time to have in him pride or arrogance, is a contradiction and the cause of great loss.

"Allah has created you from dust, hence O bondsman,
Adopt an attitude of meekness and humility like dust."

Sometimes, it also happens that the feeling of *'Qabz'* comes about as a result of some sins being committed. Through these sins, darkness is created in the heart as a result of which no pleasure is felt in the performance of the ibaadat. But no matter what the cause of *'Qabz'* may be, much seeking of forgiveness (istighfaar) proves to be very beneficial.

My Sheikh Hazrat Phulpoori (R.A.) said: "No matter how strong the feelings of *'Qabz'* one may feel, no matter how deep the feeling of darkness in the heart and the spiritual inactivity one may feel and no matter if this condition lasts for years, in order to combat it, one must daily make wudoo and then perform two rak'ahs nafal salaah with the intention of *'toubah'*. Thereafter proceed into sujood and in utter humility, grief and crying before Allah make 'istigfaar' and then recite this Wazeefa 360 times:

يَاحَيُّ يَاقَيُّومُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

"Ya Hayyum, Ya Qayyum,
La ilaha illa anta Subhaanaka innee kuntu minaz -
Zaalimeen".

*"O Living God, O Self Subsisting One, there is no God save Thee.
Verily I have been of the unjust ones."*

In this Wazeefa we have the words *'Ya Hayyu, Ya Qayyum'*. These are two Holy Names of Allah and in the Hadith it has been mentioned as being the Ismul-A'zam - *'The Great Name of Allah'*. This is followed by that verse of the Quran which Nabi Yunus (A.S.) recited and through its recitation, he was saved from three layers of darkness. The first layer of darkness was the darkness of night. The second layer of darkness was the darkness within the water and the third one was the darkness within the belly of the fish. To explain Nabi Yunus's (A.S.) condition in the three darknesses, the Quran says *'Wa huwa Kazeem'*: 'He was depressed'.

'Kazm' is an arabic term that is given to that feeling of distress in which a person remains quiet.

Through the blessings of this verse, Allah saved Nabi Yunus (A.S.) from sorrows and thereafter Allah announced: *"Wa Katha lika nun-jil mu meneen":'And so we save the believers'*.

This shows that from that day until Qiyamat, this verse had been revealed as a treatment for driving off sorrows and affliction. Any believer, when in trouble and encountering calamities, habitually and profusely shall recite this verse, he will surely be saved.

In this verse, there is mention of Allah's Glory and also an admission of one's own nothingness and unworthiness. Further, there is also a measure of the expression of grief and regret which is tantamount to toubah (repentance). In fact, it is the most important ingredient of Repentance. After reciting this verse, one must then recite Durood Shareef three times.

The story being told was about a saintly man living in the rural areas who was suffering from a very heavy form of *'Qabz'*. It so happened that the nearness he felt towards Allah became clouded like clouds over the sun. He went from one place to another crying in sorrow over the loss of Allah's communion. He went about crying and lamenting the loss of his condition:

"My Beloved, just like cooked dhall without rice, is tasteless,
So also are the days of my life in Thy absence.
Through sorrow the days of my life seem foreign to me
And my nights and days are suffering in parting from Thee.
O My Beloved, through Thy parting my days are bitter
And from my soul my comfort has been removed."

When my Murshid used to relate this story, the tears used to stream from his eyes and a strange condition used to descend upon him. It is true that the pleasure of love should be heard from the one who experiences such love and knows the pains involved therein. *"How can one without pain know the ecstasy of such pain?"*

In any case, we were talking about a dervish undertaking a long and arduous journey to meet his Murshid, Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (R.A.). After this long and arduous journey he finally reached Khaarqaan. After making enquiries from various people, he finally reached the house of his Sheikh. He knocked on the door. At the time Hazrat Shah Saheb (R.A.) was not at home. He had gone towards the forest to fetch some wood. From inside the house, Shah Saheb's wife enquired: *"Who is there?"* He replied: *"I am a Musaafir, who has travelled a long journey with the* *sole purpose of visiting Shah Saheb"*. The wife was a woman with a bad and quick temperament. When she heard about the traveller's love and confidence in the Sheikh, she became very angry and said: *"O Man, have you no other work in this world than to undertake such a long journey with so much difficulty and all that pain and effort for something useless?"*

She then continued to criticise Hazrat Shah Saheb (R.A.) in such insulting words that it would be inappropriate even to mention them. When the Mureed heard these words from the Sheikh's wife, he could not restrain himself and said: *"If you did not have a marriage relationship with Hazrat Sheikh (R.A.), then I would tear your body to pieces. But you are the wife of that Great Devoted Areef of Allah. Therefore, I will refrain from any rudeness."*

The traveller then departed from the house and enquired from the people the whereabout of the Sheikh. Someone informed him that the Sheikh had gone to the forest to fetch wood. In his love for the Sheikh, the mureed went in that direction. On the way he thought to himself:

"Such a great and famous Sheikh and he has such a bad-tempered wife. I do not know how such a bad-tempered wife can be blessed with the company of such a man". While those thoughts were passing through his mind, he saw someone coming along on the back of a lion with a bundle of wood. It was none other than the saint of that time, Hazrat Shah Abul-Hasan Kharqani (R.A.). When the Sheikh saw the Mureed he burst out laughing. He realised that the words of the wife have made him sad and depressed. He said:

"If my patience did not bear the bitterness of a bad-tempered woman,
Then why would this lion now carry me around?
I bear the many heavy burdens and difficulties caused by this foolish woman
And these are all borne for Allah's sake as mujahadah,
Because I am beloved and accepted amongst men

And the honour of men causes pride to be created in me.
Thus my pride and arrogance is treated for me by this woman
Through her insulting ways and ill-tempered manner."

Allah is the Lord of this world. From Him alone comes both the outward and inner fostering of men. Thus for the inner fostering of any devotee, He produces the means towards the unseen ways of fostering. He handles every devotee according to his measure of tolerating sorrows and bearing them, No matter how purified a person's self may be, there always exists the danger of a relapse towards evil.

"The nature of the self is like Fir-aun.
Be not satisfied with it
Whenever you become unmindful of it,
It remembers its previous Kufr."

My Sheikh Moulana Phulpoori (R.A.) told me a story about a certain saintly man. His maid servant, having seen him for quite some time eating chicken and dressed in splendid clothes, began wondering: *"What kind of Holy man is this who at all times lives a life of comfort and never experiences any difficulties?"*

The maid servant informed the Sheikh about her doubts: *"Sir, I have heard that the saints of Allah are made to bear great burdens and calamities while on Allah's path. Then in reply to that they become blessed with the great blessing of Wilayat (sainthood). But I see you at all times eating chicken and dressed in splendid clothes".* The Saint on hearing these words uttered one sigh and replied: *"Remove my clothes from my back".* When she lifted the clothes from his back she saw a huge running sore on his back from which pus was all the time being exuded. This sore was all the time giving the Sheikh much pain and trouble. Seeing this the servant became quite ashamed and asked for pardon for her misconception.

Thus we see that there are times when the saintly ones will joke and jest. They will sometimes wear splendid clothes, eat splendid food, accept the invitations from friends and people will press and kiss their hands and feet but ask their hearts what passes through them:

> *"On my lips there is always a smile and my eyes too are not wet*
> *with tears,*
> *But, the continuous tears of my heart, no one knows."*

LESSON

From this story, we learn that if involuntarily some calamity or misfortune befalls us we should not be unduly worried because in exchange for that misfortune and sorrow, Allah grants such a bounty that is so much greater than the calamity. Sometimes, a small calamity can be the cause of being saved from a major calamity. Just as in this story we see how the ill temper of the wife proved to be a saviour for Hazrat Shah Saheb (R.A.) from pride and arrogance.

However, one should not seek misfortunes or wish for calamities but should at all times pray for well-being: *"O Allah, we are weak and do not possess the strength to bear misfortunes. I am begging of You for general well being."*

When we pray we should always pray for Aafiyah (well-being) but should also remember that whatever conditions Allah sends over us, we should be satisfied therewith and should also at all times pray that Allah keep calamities far away from us.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT JALALUDDIN RUMI (R.A.)

Hazrat Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.) was a great man of his era and Allah gave him a considerable amount of Divine Knowledge. He was born at a place called Balkh in the year 604 A.H. He belonged to the offspring of Sayyedena Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq رضي الله عنه and was a grandson of Sultan Muhammad Khwarizm Shah (R.A.). At the age of six years his father took him to the famous saint, Hazrat Baba Fariduddeen Attaar (R.A.)

The saint presented him with a copy of his Mathnavi Asraar-Nama as a gift and informed his father: *"This son of yours will one day cause a tremendous upheaval."*

A few years later Moulana proceeded to Syria for the purpose of completing his education.He stayed in Damascus for seven years. There he became acquainted with all the schools of thought, Ilmul-Kalaam, jurisprudence and had specialised knowledge regarding the differences of opinion among the various schools of thought. When his days of acquiring knowledge had been completed, he occupied himself with teaching and lecturing. However, Moulana had been created for the object of teaching Divine Love and Divine Knowledge and thus the fire of Divine Love had been placed within his heart.

"The teaching of the Divine Lover is to remember Him
With crying and lamentation and dancing in ecstasy
And not in increased reading of chapter and sections.
Just as Abu Hanifa and Shafi had been created for fiqh (jurisprudence),
So Rumi (R.A.) has been created for teaching the path of Love.
For the Divine Lovers the beauty of the Beloved is the best teacher.
When a true connection with Allah is formed in the heart,
Then without study or teacher the knowledge of prophethood will rage inside."

For preparing him for the role of teaching of Divine Love for which Allah had created Moulana Rumi (R.A.), Allah made His own arrangements from the unseen world. In the heart of Shamsuddin Tabrezi (R.A.) there was an ocean of Divine Love and he was searching for a way of spreading these jewels from his heart and earnestly prayed: *"O Allah! You have placed a treasure of Divine Love in my heart. Grant me such a special one from among your bondsmen into whose heart I may transfer this treasure, so that the person may with his tongue of Love expound my secrets in the light of the Quran and Hadith"*. This prayer was immediately answered. Shamsuddin Tabrezi (R.A.) received a reply: *"Go t Rum where you will meet Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.). We have chosen him for this task."*

From the unseen, arrangements were made for Rumi.
When Shamsh Tabrezi besought Allah's help:
"O Allah, the fire that burns in my chest,
The agitation that rises in this being.
O Allah, let me find such a person
Who will be fit to bear this burden.
For indeed is near the hour of parting,
To whom shall I entrust this trust, O Beloved?"
Then from the unseen came the reply:
"O Shamsh Tabrezi, proceed speedily to Rum
And make Moulvy Rum the Master of Rum
And free him from the duties that bind him."

As soon as he heard this *"voice"*, Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) proceeded to Rum. He went to Qunya where he settled among the sellers of brass goods. There, near the door of an inn, was a platform on which the elders of the sellers used to sit. It was at this spot that Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) and Moulana Rumi (R.A.) first met each other and from there onwards their friendship grew. While in the company of Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.), the condition of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) underwent a complete change. As Divine Love began to take its full effect upon him, Moulana Rumi (R.A.) became drunk with the love of God. He stopped his teaching, lecturing, preaching and refused to be removed from the company of Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) for even a short while. This change caused a tremendous commotion in the town.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) writes:

"O Beloved One! In the path of Your love my cries of drunkenness seem beautiful.
Till the day of Qiyamat, this madness will I continue to love dearly."

At that time Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) condition had become as is explained by these poetic lines:

"It is the message from a troubled heart
Without You there can be quiet but no comfort.
We are filled with agitation
And this is the prize of love."

When the effects of Divine Love became visible on Moulana Rumi (R.A.), a rumour was spread about in the town that Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) has used sorcery on Moulana Rumi (R.A.). For fear of further spreading of this rumour, Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) secretly left the town and went to Damascus. This separation caused Moulana Rumi (R.A.) a tremendous amount of sorrow. Seeing the condition in which he was, some people went to call back Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.). Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) returned but after staying for a short period, be again disappeared somewhere. Some historians have mentioned that someone killed him and thus made him into a martyr. This separation from his spiritual guide, made Moulana Rumi (R.A.) very restless. His life became very bitter.

"O Beloved, through parting from you my life has become bitter,
And from my life all comfort has been removed.
O Beloved, through the sorrow of parting from you,
Cries of parting are coming from my lips to the outside.
O Morning breeze, take the message of this far away
From a miserable lover to his Beloved Sheikh.
O Beloved, Your grace which has been with me all along,
When I remember, my soul, like a mad man
Searches for the scent of your being."

The effect that the blessed company of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) had on Moulana Rumi (R.A.) can be gauged from the words of the Mathnavi. The 28 000 couplets contained in the Mathnavi are from the tongue of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) but actually those poetic lines are in fact the fire that emanated from the chest of

Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.), which needed a tongue to be expressed. Thus Allah has made Moulana Rumi (R.A.) the tongue of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.).

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) was a grandchild of a King and an eminent scholar of Hadith and Tafseer. When he proceeded anywhere, numerous students out of love for him used to follow him on foot. Now that same Moulana Rumi (R.A.) was carrying the belongings of his spiritual guide, his bedding, his cups and his grain on his head and following his peer wherever he went.

"Such a big Sheikh has become like a donkey walking about,
Such is love when it comes. So you false lovers, beware."

Look at what the company of a True Sheikh did to Moulana! The Love for his Sheikh had made Moulana Rumi (R.A.) like a mad one. No more did he have the sedan, the special robes, turban, and the love of students gathering around him. Instead of the signs of knowledge being visible, he was now overcome by the signs of poverty. In fact now he had been made aware of the true reality of Knowledge.

"In truth, true knowledge is the name of Allah's Love.
Otherwise, if one disregards the true object of acquiring knowledge,
Then such knowledge becomes a means for Iblees to mislead.
That knowledge which does not lead towards Allah,
Is in fact not knowledge, but ignorance.
Arrogance of knowledge keeps one deprived of truth, dear friends.
The aim and object of knowledge is but to acquire Divine Love,
Apart from that all else is deception and deceit."

(Akhtar)

But the true idea of knowledge only comes out after having been in the company of a true spiritual guide. That happens when the turban of Fazeelat becomes lost in the turban of love. Then the true object is attained.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Leave aside all lectures and leave 'Qeela' (it was said) and 'Qaala'

(he said).
Become a Sahib-e-haal (person of action). Create love for Allah Inside
That can come along once you've chosen the company of a Divine Lover."

The spiritual glances which Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) gave to Moulana Rumi (R.A.), made such an impact on him and bestowed him with such a favour, that normally this is only attained after a lifetime of strenuous spiritual exercises. For this reason Moulana Rumi (R.A.) had such great a love for each and every one of his utterances and anything connected with his Sheikh, so much so that he even had a great love for the town of Tabrez. In the Mathnavi, whenever the town of Tabrez is mentioned, there are several couplets in praise of the town itself.

Hajee Imdadullah Muhaajir Makki (R.A.) used to say: "The description of the attributes that Moulana Rumi (R.A.) has given in the Mathnavi regarding the *'Awliyaa-Allah'* is taken from his own personal experiences. This is due to the fact that he had attained *'nisbat'* (contact with Allah) without any strenuous spiritual efforts and exercises. For this reason, he used to praise the *'Awliyaa - Allah'* very highly.

He said:
"The existence of a spiritual guide is like a ladder leading towards Allah.
And how can an arrow fly in speed to its destination without a bow?"

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) spent many hours in solitude in the service of his *'peer'* (spiritual guide) and thus pulled the fire of Divine Love into his chest, for which Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) used to pray to Allah in such earnestness. *"O Allah, grant me such a person who will be able to bear the fire of love from me"*. Through the blessings of the company of the true Sheikh, true Imaan began to be felt and through the blessings of Divine Love, waves from the ocean of knowledge entered into his heart. So wide was this ocean of knowledge that even up till today, the Awliyaa are benefiting by it. Even today, the Mathnavi is busy lighting the flame of Divine Love. We can ascertain both Moulana's knowledge and his 'inner knowledge' by studying the Mathnavi.

At this point I wish to quote an example from which it can be deduced how high was his rank of love.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"When upon Mt. Toor's outer peak the light of Allah was exposed,
It fell down into pieces so that the light not merely touched the outside but also protruded inside.
When in the hands of a starving one a piece of bread is placed,
Then it causes saliva to flow in the mouth and the eyes to tear.
Such became Toor, that the light also reached its insides."

The description of how Mt. Toor was broken into small pieces which Moulana described in the light of Divine Love also gives an indication of Moulana's own love-like relationship. How much did Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) contact with Allah undergo a complete transformation through Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi's (R.A.) fire of love? This can only be gauged from the following couplet:

"The pace of holy man in his spiritual progress is such
That each month's journey is the equal of one day,
But the True Lovers of Allah are such
That at every breath their souls fly to the King of Kings.
O Father, discard sleep for one night
And enter into the gully of sleeplessness and see.
Then come and see how true love has made these sleepless ones mad
And see how like butterflies they are slain in the splendour of nearness to God.
O Man who dirtied yourself through passionate desires,
Come hither as my character has become such that it is Divine Akhlak.
In the hearts of saints there are numerous secret melodies of True Love

From which true seekers are granted precious life.
O You who for the sake of worldly gain go before worldly ones in humility
And in the presence of the Saintly act in arrogant manner,
Whereas in fact these ones are worthy of royal treatment.
I am a royal falcon and through the blessings of Divine Love
Have been endowed with virtuous ways.
Through the blessings of True Love
My attributes have been changed from that of a vulture towards the praiseworthy.
When my bad manners through the blessings of my Murshid disappeared
And my self became endowed with good manners,
Now I hear through the Noor of Allah and see through His Noor.
And I see His Noor on my right, on my left, above me and below me.
And I find the Noor of Truth around my neck and head like a collar on me."

Through the blessings of Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.), Moulana Rumi (R.A.) had reached such a high position of Divine Love and in his soul he had experienced such a feeling of love, that this could to a certain extent be ascertained from this verse:

"Wine became intoxicating due to us,
Not that we became intoxicated through wine.
This body is existing because of the soul,
The soul is not in need of the body for its existence."

When the soul has a special contact with Allah, then the attributes of the soul overwhelm the attributes of the *'nafs'*. As the Rooh is connected with the real world it is in contrast to the Hereafter like a prison. Thus when the true devotee of Allah experiences true love within his soul, he then feels the need for the everlasting intoxication of the Hereafter to that of the temporary and passing intoxication of this world.

When the enjoyment of spiritual ecstasy (Haal) overwhelmed Moulana Rumi (R.A.), he started feeling the insignificance of theological arguments. Faith through spiritual experience replaced faith through logical arguments and taqleed. These seemed to have no significance whatsoever.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Proofs and arguments of proof have legs of wood, which are weak,
But Divine Knowledge through taqwa, righteous deeds and true love are beneficial indeed."

The Imaan which comes about through the insight of the heart is even greater than the experiences experienced through the senses. The yaqeen produced in the company of the saints and the profuse performance of the Zikr is a mountain of steadfastness in its strength. The whole world may become contaminated with *'Kufr and Shirk'*, but the person will at all times hold onto the tenets of towheed.

As Hazrat Saadi Shirazi (R.A.) says:

"Even though a bundle of gold is placed at the feet of a true believer,
And even though a naked sword be placed on his neck,
Neither will greed for anything sway him from towheed
Nor will fear for the sword induce him to stray."

It must be noted that the true believer in towheed is not living in the hope of reaping any worldly benefits therefrom. Nor is there any fear in him and this is the essence of towheed.

However, these days there is a new policy in this world, which has made a change according to the times, the criterion for success in life. This is another one of those items imported from the West and advocates that we should change according to the demands of our time, irrespective of whether during the course of that our Imaan is being destroyed or not. This policy and the search after truth are two contradictory items. The Seeker after truth has one aim in front of him and that is to acquire the pleasure and satisfaction of Allah alone, while the upholders of this new policy will have to bend down in order to satisfy all the people of the times. This means the people following this new policy will always be thinking and considering ways to please others whereas a believer is completely unconcerned of the time, seeking only the pleasure of the Great Creator.

Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.) gave an open invitation to all the people to create within themselves the great wealth of everlasting contact with Allah. He invited them to the great bounty which he himself had tasted and enjoyed and which he now wanted everyone else to enjoy and reap the benefit.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that the saintly ones keep many secrets hidden from others because the average ordinary man is unable to properly comprehend them. But sometimes it does happen that, in an involuntary manner, something does get mentioned as in the case of the mouth uttering some things at the time of sneezing or yawning when it involuntarily opens up. At such times, some such secrets are uttered which Allah wants to spread about. He creates such a condition to come over them that they are unable to control it and thus makes them to utter such words. This is done so that interested people may get an inkling of that world which may cause their hearts to be turned away from this transitory world and incline them towards the unseen world.

"O People, if for one moment you experience the splendour of His nearness,
You will in great earnestness submit yourself to earnest Mujahadah.
And if you should within your self see the splendour of His nearness,
You will find this world and all its pleasures tasteless and bitter."

Now listen to the advise which Moulana gives, which, if acted upon, the human soul becomes filled with love for the Divine Being and causes the heart to become disenchanted with this world.

"Within yourself create the path towards Allah.

How is that achieved?
Cast from you the perception of the pictures of others
And when others leave the heart, Allah's splendour will enter into it.
O Man, treat your illness with the alchemy medicine that was placed within your body.
So that good morals be created from bad
And so that your enemies, yourself and your desires, turn to friends.
And when through the spiritual guide your bad morals turn to good,
You will become beautiful,
And He will bring you near to Him
And save you from the loneliness in contrast to worldly lovers
From whom He will turn away."

Through the blessed company of Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.), Moulana Rumi (R.A.) experienced such a frenzy of love and madness and in such a speedy manner had passed through the various stages of acquiring spiritual progress through the process of Jazb, that he became convinced that the only path towards Allah was the path of Love and madness for Him.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Any other path apart from the path of frenzied love and madness
Are all paths leading to being far removed from Him.
The cry of the insane one in love appears good to me.
O Beloved, so I desire to remain till Qiyamat - a mad one.
If apart from the chains of Shariat two hundred chains should be tied around my feet,
I would break them all as no chains can hold him who is a mad Divine Lover of God."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) was an ocean of Divine Love and for a lover nothing except the remembrance of his Beloved is pleasing and then there are times when he used to long for another Divine Lover with whom he could converse about the True Beloved One and through this bring comfort and peace to his troubled heart.

After the demise of Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.), Moulana

Rumi (R.A.) was now in search of such a companion. One day, in this troubled state of the mind, he was passing by the shop of Salahuddin Zarkoob who was very busy beating metal leaves into thin foil. While the hammer was beating the metal it made such a noise that devotees felt a feeling of love in their hearts. Moulana at that time was a man filled with Divine Love and on hearing the sounds of the hammer, fell down unconscious. Salahuddin did not stop beating the metal leaves and in this manner wasted many of them. Finally in the heart of Salahuddin, as a result of the grace of Moulana Rumi (R.A.), the fire of Divine Love was lit. He left his shop as it was and followed Moulana Rumi (R.A.).

"O heart consumed with love, what did you breathe into my heart
That there is in my heart a burning fire?
I was not aware of the ways of love
But let a similar heart be pressed against my chest.
Perhaps its name is love and madness,
This flame that has been lit inside."

For a period of 9 years, Salahuddin remained in the company and service of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) and his company brought great comfort to Moulana. Salahuddin passed away in 664 A.H. After his demise, Moulana Rumi (R.A.) chose from amongst his Mureeds Husamuddin Chalpi to be his special companion for as long as he remained alive. Thus he consoled himself in his great longing for the True Beloved. It was through the encouragement provided by Moulana Husamuddin (R.A.) that Moulana Rumi (R.A.) wrote his famous work, The Mathnavi. Moulana Rumi (R.A.) referred to this in the Mathnavi:

"Just as a thirsty one throws walnuts into deep water repeatedly
(which he cannot reach)
In order to hear its sound and to see its bubbles.
So, O Hasamuddin, my object is you in this Mathnavi.
And this Mathnavi from its beginning is for you

And upon you is its ending, O Husamuddin.
My object in this Mathnavi is to explain your words as words denote the glory of the writer. For in truth, the writer is you. I am merely the means for your voice and meanings."

Once Moulana Rumi (R.A.), while reciting the Mathnavi, suddenly remained silent and said: *"At this time from the unseen no words are coming. For this reason there is no form. That is why I prefer to remain silent"*. Then he said: *"It is a fact that the themes of the Mathnavi are inspired from on High"*.

Moulana refers to that in the following lines:

"When I ponder about rhyme and stanzas, my Beloved says to me:
Think not about rhyming, just ponder over my countenance.
I will inspire you with the lines. Do not burden your heart with it."

THE STORY OF HAZRAT UMAR رضي الله عنه AND THE ROMAN ENVOY

Once the ambassador of the Emperor of Rome came to Madina with many gifts. Arriving at Madina, he enquired from the people the whereabouts of the palace of the King of Madina. The people replied: *"Our King has no palace. However, our leader, the leader of the believers has a mansion - his respected self which has a special contact with Allah and which has become enlightened through the splendour of His nearness. Thus this has made him independent of the need for royal palaces."*

They further informed him: *"You will find the leader of the believers, Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه in the graveyard of Madina"*. The Roman Ambassador then went to the graveyard and there saw Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه lying down, having taken off his shirt with a sheet covering the lower part of his body. He was lying down fast asleep on the ground with no throne or crown on his head. Neither were there any soldiers nor any bodyguards. But as the ambassador looked at his face, he began shaking with fear. Within himself he said:

"I have seen many great Kings in this life
And have been the companion and confidant of many Rulers.
Never have I any fear for any King.
But the awe and fear I feel for this one
Dressed in such tattered clothing is causing my senses to depart.
This person without any weapons and without any forces sleeping here alone on this ground.
What is it that causes my whole body to shake and tremble in awe of him?
Even if I had seven bodies, they would not bear it and all would tremble."

Then the envoy said to himself:

"This awe and fear that I feel is not for this one who is dressed in tattered clothes.
In fact, this is fear of Allah for this tattered clothed one has a heart that is blessed with Allah's contact and nearness."

Thus this envoy, through the blessings of Hazrat Umar's رضي الله عنه. company and grace converted to Islam.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"He who fears Allah and adopts a life of righteousness, him the jinn and men fear
And whoever sees him is overpowered by awe and fear."

LESSON

This story teaches us the lesson that true honour for men is brought about by true and deep contact with Allah and not by outward shows of beauty and adornment. But the foolish ones of our age are displeasing Allah and in spite of committing sins are endeavouring to acquire honour and respect by building beautiful mansions, dressing in expensive clothing and putting their trust in their businesses. But we see that the honour they acquire is such that in their absence, those very same people who honour them in their presence swear them.

Today, he may be the President of the country, but the moment he vacates that position or is removed from this position, then there is no more any honour for him in the newspapers. Similarly is the position of the Kings. But Saints of Allah, the Awliyaa - Allah, are the true Kings. Hence they are called Shah. This is their true position and description in this world as well as after their demise. They continue to be mentioned with honour even after their death.

THE STORY OF THE CROWN OF NABI SULAYMAN (A.S.)

Once Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) stood before a mirror and placed the crown on his head. The crown landed on his head in a crooked manner. He again placed it on his head and straightened it, but again it landed crookedly. Then for the third time he again straightened it but again it landed crookedly. This caused him to become overwhelmed with fear of Allah. He fell down in prostration and cried in repentance before Him. Thereafter he again placed the crown on his head and this time it was straight. Then Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) realised that there had been some action of his which Allah disapproved of and which caused Him to divert His countenance from him. Thus for this reason the lifeless crown had turned crooked on his head.

Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) was a Prophet and Prophets are sinless. The question that arises in the heart is: *"Did any sin of his take place? Did Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) commit any sin?"*

The answer to the question is that no sin was committed by him. Sometimes in their reckoning the Prophets choose to leave aside the most excellent line of action, preferring at a given moment to adopt another permissible line of action. In such cases they are punished for having discarded the most excellent line of action. In actual fact the alternate deed is in itself permissible. Thus this is the type of action Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) may have committed but which Allah disapproved of.

Another question that arises: The crown is a lifeless thing. So how could the lifeless thing have moved to become crooked on his head? Moulana answers by saying that the four elements, dust, air, water and fire are the basis of all things and their creation. Although these four elements are all lifeless, their contact with Allah is like the contact of living things. All these concrete things and plants understand the orders of Allah and on hearing them are quick to obey.

THE STORY OF HOW A PERSON'S MOUTH TURNED SKEW THROUGH HAVING MENTIONED THE PROPHET'S ﷺ NAME IN JEST

A person took the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ mockingly. His face turned skew and remained like that. That unfortunate evil one came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: "Pardon me, as you have the gift of special knowledge from Him. "

Moulana Rumi says :

"When Allah Taala decides to bring disgrace upon someone,
He causes him to incline towards mocking the saintly one.

This evil inclination also is a consequence of some other sin of his,
That he begins to taunt the righteous ones.
Allah then punishes him with disgrace and humiliation.
And when Allah desires to hide someone's faults and sins,
He helps him not to speak of the faults of faulty ones.
And when He desires to favour us with good,
He makes us incline towards sighing and crying in front of Him.
Refreshed be that eye which cries in front of that truly Beloved

And may that heart be blessed which is broiled in His Love.
Where there is flowing water, there greenery grows
And where tears flow, there Allah's garden blooms."

The Hadith teaches us that there are two drops of water which are very much loved by Allah: The drops of tears that are shed through the fear of Allah and the drops of blood that are shed in Allah's path.

"When he repented from his courage for committing sins,
Rasulullah ﷺ granted him pardon.
If you desire Allah's mercy then in crying grant pardon for him
Who begs of pardon from you.
And if you seek the Mercy of Allah,
Then first show mercy to the weak ones."

THE STORY OF THE 'NIGHT RUBY LAMP' AND THE WATER COW

The aquatic cow or bull brings forth pearls from the water at night and grazes in the meadows, consuming the iris and odoriferous plants. For this reason its faeces are amber in colour as a result of its feeding upon such delicate and exquisite plants like narcissus, nelofar and other sweet-smelling plants.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) mentioned this. Thereafter he states a very precious thing. He says that just as the aquatic bull's food is the cause of bringing forth sweet-smelling scent, likewise the one whose food consists of Zikr and the obedience to Allah will produce from his lips such words which will be indeed very effective.

"He whose diet consists of Zikr and obedience to God,
Why should his words not become effective?"

Furthermore the aquatic cow grazes in the light of the jewel until it moves far away from the pearl. A trader comes along with the aim of taking possession of the pearl. He takes black mud and throws it over the pearl. As a result of this the entire meadow becomes dark as the mud now stops the rays of the pearl from spreading. Meanwhile, the cow walks about in the grazing field in order to attack the opponent with its horns but the opponent sits quite safely among the trees. When the cow despairs of attacking the enemy, it returns to the spot where the pearl is kept, but only sees the mud which now covers the pearl, and runs away.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) after mentioning the above incident gives a beautiful piece of advise. He says that Shaitaan too, seeing the earthly form of Hazrat Adam (A.S.) fled like that animal fled on seeing the mud which had covered the ruby. He refused to prostrate before Hazrat Adam (A.S.) as Allah Taala had commanded. Instead he raised an objection stating that he was created of fire, which rises high and is therefore superior to Hazrat Adam (A.S.) who was created of dust. The wretched Iblis could not understand that within the earthly form was hidden the soul of him who was to become the vicegerent of Allah Taala i.e. Nabi Adam (A.S.).

" With the command of Allah Taala to Adam (A.S.):
'Get thee down', the soul of Hazrat Adam (A.S.)
Was placed in his body made of earth and water."

Moulana Rumi continues,

"O friends, discard this search after comforts and avoid these arguments and debates
And become involved with sulook, as following of lustful desires is the destruction of men.
For just as Iblees was unaware of what lay inside the earthly form
So also the aquatic cow was unaware that the pearl was under the mud."

LESSON

Similarly is the position of the foolish ones of this age, who look at the external poverty and indigent condition of the Ahlullah (saints of Allah) and then compare their condition with their own beautiful mansions and splendid clothing and thus become deceived by these material things. They fail to understand, that treasures lie buried in that ruined condition. Further they fail to understand that in that state of worldly deprivation lies the riches and in that state of madness is hidden true intelligence and wisdom. In other words, the Saints of Allah have their sole contact with Allah and one should not be deceived by their poverty. May Allah guide those opponents of the Saints who flee from them.

The conclusion to the story is this: The trader is looking from the tree at the water cow and waiting for the foolish one to become fed up with the mud and turn towards the water, so that he may take the pearl out of the mud and return home successful.

Similarly, in acquiring benefit from the Awliyaa-Allah, one should not look upon their earthly bodies. Rather they should smell the fragrance of Allah from their souls. They should do what Majnoon did when he heard that Layla had passed away. He went to the graveyard, crying long and bitterly, smelled the sand of every grave and when he finally smelled the sand of Layla's grave, he declared: *"This is Layla's grave."*

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) speaks of this when he says,

"Like Majnoon I too smell the dust till I find the sand of Layla (i.e. true saints of Allah)
The true seekers of Allah got the fragrance of the Master
From the fragrance of His true devotees and lovers."

By attending a few "majlises" and gatherings, he realises that within the heart which is in that body is the nisbat or contact with Allah Taala.

Once on a journey, Rasulullah ﷺ said to the Sahabah: *"I am smelling the fragrance of Allah from the direction of Yemen"*. That was the fragrance of Hazrat Uwais Qarni (R.A.), who was a great

Saint of Allah living in the village of Qarn in Yemen. He was a True Lover of Allah and His Messenger. He could not present himself before Rasulullah ﷺ as he was busy in the service of his mother.

"Said the Prophet: From the direction of Yemen in the air,
I smell the fragrance of Allah."

According to a Hadith, Rasulullah ﷺ said: *"Verily I find the smell of the Rahman (The Merciful One) from the direction of Yemen."*

Even today, the True Lovers and Seekers after Allah find the smell of Allah from the Saints and they are not embarrassed or shy to gain benefit from them.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.)says:

"O Ye enemy of love and shame, come to Me.
I have ripped to pieces the curtain of shame
Which prevents obedience to Divine Command."

THE STORY OF THE PATIENCE AND TOLERANCE OF NABI MOOSA (A.S.)

Nabi Moosa (A.S.) being a shepherd in the service of Nabi Shuaib (A.S.) is mentioned in the Quran. One day while grazing the goats, a goat ran away. Nabi Moosa (A.S.) had to run after it so far that his feet became filled with blisters. He walked so far that the rest of the flock too could not be seen anymore. Finally the goat became tired and came to a standstill and Nabi Moosa (A.S.) caught it.

Instead of being angry with the goat or beating it, he rubbed sympathetically around its neck, back and head. Like a mother he acted kindly to the animal and although having suffered so much himself, did not in any way show his displeasure. In fact he felt sorry for the animal so much that tears came to his eyes. He said to the goat: *"I thought that you had no mercy upon me. That is why you made me so exhausted. But why did you not have mercy* *upon yourself. If you had no mercy upon the blisters upon my feet and the thorns that pricked me, then at least you should have had mercy upon yourself."*

At that moment Allah said to the Angels: *"Nabi Moosa (A.S.) is now suited for Prophethood."* (In other words: The ability to withstand the sorrows of the Ummat and also to withstand the injuries from their side and the heart to bear all difficulties).

"Allah said to the angels:
For the prophethood of this era,
Moosa is the suitable person."
"Nabi Mustapha ﷺ has said that before acquiring Prophethood,
Every Prophet used to be a shepherd".

In Bukhari Shareef this is also mentioned in a Hadith and Moulana discussed the wisdom in that:

"So that through grazing sheep and goats,
The Prophet's patience and dignity may be exposed.
The reason they are made to rear goats is,
To teach them patience and gentleness amidst adversity."

Someone inquired of Rasulullah ﷺ:
"Did you also look after sheep, O Best of Creation?"
He replied: *"Yes, indeed, I also at one time was a shepherd."*
"Allah, after this herding of sheep, grants spiritual shepherdhood
And after delivering the duty of a shepherd
He grants the Prophets the position of spiritual herdsman."

It is said that being a herdsman inculcates into one the habit of tolerance and clemency as the sheep and goats have the habit of walking away in all directions. Thus the herdsman has a great problem in gathering them together just like Nabi Moosa (A.S.) was troubled in the above story.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT SAFOORA (A.S.)

The *"Tajalli"* of Allah Taala (noor-light) which was cast on

Mount Toor caused the mountain to crumble and Hazrat Moosa (A.S.) to fall unconscious. When he regained consciousness and returned from the mountain, then for some days his face still had such a glow that whosoever looked at his face directly became dazzled and turned blind. He therefore prayed to Allah Taala that He should grant him such a screen over the noor on his face that peoples eyes may be saved from damage.

Allah Taala ordered him to cover His face with a part of that blanket with which he covered himself on Mount Toor and which was able to bear the intensity of that noor on that mountain.

"For apart from that blanket O Moosa!,
Even if Mount Qaaf tries to block that noor from your face it too would be shattered"

It is through Allah's power that the and saintly ones are able to bear the Noor of Allah. That Noor which Mount Toor could not bear, Allah through His power has made the hearts into a mirror so that it could reflect the Light. Rasulullah ﷺ had referred to this when in a Hadith Qudsi he said: *"Allah says: Space and orbits do not contain me, neither do minds nor the selves of men."*

"However in the heart of a believer I am contained like a guest
Who has been given full access and control over the residence of the host."

In this couplet *'contained like a guest'* is to indicate the honour and respect together with love. *'Contained'*, here does not indicate being inside a specific space as Allah is free from being *'contained'* in any space.

"Without such a mirror no one could bear to look upon my beauty,
Neither on this earth nor in the heavens."

The story continues: Nabi Moosa (A.S.) made a face covering from the blanket and prohibited the people from staring at his face without this veil.

The piece of blanket did the job which doors and walls could not do. Even if the veil had been made of iron, it too would have melted due to the Noor that remained on Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) face, after the shining of splendour on Mount Toor. The veil had been in touch with the warmth of Divine Love and at the time of its burning blaze, it was part of the clothing of a Saint of Allah. For this reason it could now be used as a curtain for the Noor that was shining from Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) face.

Hazrat Safoora, the wife of Nabi Moosa (A.S.), was a great Lover of his Prophethood. She became restless and impatient of this veil. Her love became so overwhelming that she looked directly at the face of Nabi Moosa (A.S.) with one eye. Immediately her sight of that eye was lost. Still she could not have patience. She opened her other eye and that one also lost its sight.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) explained that a seeker after Allah initially offers bread in the path of Allah. In other words he is prepared to offer the strength which is created by the bread and offers this towards acquiring the pleasure of Allah. But as the Noor of Obedience to His Will takes effect upon him, he becomes prepared to offer his very life in Allah's path.

"At that time a woman asked Safoora:
'Have you any sorrow at your eyes losing their sight?'
She replied: 'My great sorrow is this that I do not have a hundred or
a thousand eyes, If I had,
I would sacrifice them all
In order to see the Noor of Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) countenance."

Allah so approved of this reply of Safoora and her Great Love for Nabi Moosa (A.S.) that she was granted her eyesight once again. Her sight in both the eyes were returned in such a manner that she could look directly upon Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) face. She was granted such strength in her eyesight that she would never lose it when looking at Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) face.

THE STORY OF THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A FROG AND A MOUSE

Once on the bank of a river there lived a mouse and a frog. A very close friendship developed between the two of them. This friendship grew until it became a love relationship. By mutual arrangement they used to meet each other daily in the mornings and would converse with each other for a very long time. These meetings made both of them very happy. They used to tell stories to each other and listened to each other's tales. They even told each other their secrets and considered each other alone as holders of their secrets. When they met they even remembered and related happenings of more than five years ago, to each other.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"The excitement of eloquence and conversation from the heart is a sign of love
And when there is a termination of eloquence, it is a sign of lack of love.
How can that heart which had seen its loved one ever remain stern and cross?
And when the nightingale has seen a flower, how can it ever remain silent?
When a lover sits in the company of a lover,
Thousands of stories are remembered by the heart.
The Lowhul-Mahfooz -preserved tablet is the forehead of a Beloved
Which exposes the secrets of the worlds to the Lover."
"The guide to the path of guidance - Sayedina Mustafa Muhammad ﷺ had said:
'My companions are like the stars in providing guidance.'"

EXPLANATION:

Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) objective in mentioning these couplets is to indicate that just as love and friendship between two worldly lovers becomes a means towards exposing their love secrets to each other, likewise love between the lovers for the sake of Allah and their meeting with each other becomes the exposition of true love. Hence, where Allah is the object of love as in the case where a Mureed has love for his spiritual guide, this relationship guides towards the truth. Thus when a Mureed sits in the company of his Sheikh, much unknown knowledge becomes known to him. From the heart of the Sheikh blessings and knowledge, which he could not experience up to that time, becomes reflected onto him. This is the experience every day and night of the seekers in the path of tasawuf.

The words in the couplet *"The forehead of the beloved being the Preserved Tablet - Lowhul Mahfooz"* Moulana meant this: The Mureed through his meeting with his Sheikh and being in his company acquires wonderful forms of knowledge. His heart becomes healed of various illnesses and in his contact with Allah there is a definite increase and progress.

Thereafter Moulana Rumi (R.A.) draws attention to another fact. The stars are the guiding lines on this earth for as long as one does not kick up the dust and make the air polluted. But if the air between oneself and the stars is polluted with dust, then one is unable to find the guidance in the stars. Similarly, if one sits in the company of the saintly ones, one should sit quietly, awaiting their instructions and listen attentively to their teachings. One should not kick up the dust by becoming involved with arguments, unnecessary conversation, objections or rejections, because through arguments and objections the heart of the Sheikh will be disturbed and it will stop exuding the beneficial blessings.

This does not mean that a person should not talk at all in the presence of his Sheikh, as this action will also cause the stopping of blessings. It must be remembered that the Sheikh does not have knowledge of all the needs of the Mureed. Hence, the Mureed should inform the Sheikh of his inner conditions and of his spiritual state and experiences. The Mureed should remain silent and refrain from unnecessary talks, arguments and objections.

"When one has drunk the love of Allah from a spiritual guide,
Then even if he is dumb, he will be filled with eloquence of speech."

This means that through the company of the saintly ones when love for Allah is created in the heart, then even the uneducated and illiterate ones will be able to expound great lessons of guidance. In this regard we may refer to Hazrat Haaji Imdadullah Saheb (R.A.)

He only studied Arabic upto Kaafiya and yet he later became the Sheikh of numerous Ulama, Scholars of Hadith and Tafseer.

"When Nabi Dawood (A.S.) had drunk the drink of love through his lips,
He learnt hundreds of beautiful hymns of praise to sing to the Lord.
So much so that all the birds left aside their chirping noise
And proceeded to listen to his voice and accompany him."

The story continues:

One day the mouse told the frog: *"You are swimming around in the water while I am here on the dry earth. I suffer the pangs of sorrow over being parted from you. I come to the edge of the water to call you, but while you are in the water, even the voice of a lover cannot be heard. I am not happy with just meeting and talking to you for a short while"*. Salaah has only been made obligatory five times a day, but the true lovers of Allah Ta'ala permanently enjoy communion with Allah through *"Nafl"* Salaahs.

"To be called from time to time for meeting a beloved is not for lovers,
The souls of true lovers remain thirsty at all times.
To be called for a meeting with a beloved is not for the fish,
For they will find no rest without the water.

The heart of the lover is nothing without the Beloved
There is between them no remover or removed."

EXPLANATION:

Moulana's object in mentioning these couplets is a reference to the Hadith which says that meeting each other with intervals of a day, increases the love for each other. However, true lovers are exempted from this statement as Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (R.A.) reports: *"I used to make obligatory upon myself the company of Rasulullah ﷺ at all times"*. Rasulullah ﷺ did not prohibit it; which meant that he considered it permissible. Hence the first statement is a general one, while the latter one, is for special friends. The first statement was made by the Prophet ﷺ at a time when Rasulullah ﷺ asked Abu Hurayrah (R.A.): *"O Abu Hurayrah, where were you yesterday?"* He replied: *"Yesterday, I went to visit some relatives"*. Then Rasulullah ﷺ said: *"Meeting after a days break in between will increase love"*. There seems to be a contradiction between the two statements. However, this is not so. Reconciliation between the two statements is this: To make someone's company compulsory at all times, as Abu Hurayrah (R.A.) did, refers to those situations where the contact and love is very strong. The other situation of meeting at specific times refers to those situations where the contact of love is not that strong.

"For a lover, the parting for even a moment is like a year's parting
And the meeting lasting a whole year is mere imagination."

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) further explains that the people of this world have a good understanding of worldly love, but as regards to Divine Love, which is granted to the Prophets and the Saints of Allah, they do not understand. That is because they are caught up behind the curtain of this world's external comforts and are deprived of the grace of Allah's love which annihilates the needs of the self. Hence, only those who annihilate their selves gain this blessing. It is not attained through reason alone.

"If through Reason the perception of Allah's love was possible,
Then of what use would spiritual strivings be?
In spite of the great mercy of having Allah - The Master of Reason -
Why the command: Oppose your self and overpower your desires?"

It is through these strenuous spiritual exercises that the self becomes overpowered and annihilated. The knowledge of Allah (Marifat) is dependent upon this. Moulana Sayed Sulayman Nadwi (R.A.) asked Hazrat Moulana Thanwy (R.A.): *"Hazrat what is the meaning of 'faquiri' ?"* Hazrat Thanwy (R.A.) replied: *"It means annihilating your 'self'?"*

The story continues:

The mouse then said to the frog: *"O frog, beloved; without seeing your face at all times, I cannot find peace. By day, the sight of you is my life, by night the thought of you is my consolation and sleep. It will be a great favour on your part if you will permit me the pleasure of the opportunity of meeting you at all times."*

"It will be great generosity on your part if you will cause me the delight
Of remembering me at all times with your love.
You are unconcerned with my sorrows. O, my Ameer!
Kindly grant me thy kindness and please me with your company."

Now Moulana returns to the object of the story, i.e. to return to Allah.

"O Allah, this indigent one without manners is most unsuited,
But Your Grace is all over, more higher and supreme.
O Allah, Your general Grace does not search for credentials or ability
And the sun of Your generosity even has effect on impurities.
The sun has warmed the belly of the earth
Which warmth has pulled impurities into its midst.
Those impurities have become part of the earth and created plants
And in this manner Allah wipes out sins.
If such is the robe of honour given to the evil ones,

How much more honourable will be the gift to righteous ones?
For His special bondsmen Allah prepares what no eye has seen,
And no tongue or language can ever describe.
Who are we? You kindly explain who we are?
O My Beloved, enlighten my day with beautiful morals."

EXPLANATION:

Moulana describes Allah's wonderful actions by saying: "O Allah, when out of Your kindness, the rays of the sun falls upon the earth it enlightens it, when it falls on impurities like dung it dries the solid part and converts it to fuel, which light the furnace. Another portion (i.e. the liquid part of the dung) sinks into the earth providing fertliser from which plants and fragrant flowers grow. The heat of the sun warms the earth and makes it absorb the liquid impurities. O Allah, impurities too are not deprived of Your bounty, what will be Your generosity towards the righteous servants and Lovers of Thee. You will grant such bounties which neither the eyes have seen, nor ears have heard nor has it passed through the minds of men as is said in a Hadith:

"I have prepared for my righteous servants what no eye has seen,
no ear has heard nor has passed through the minds of men."

Thereafter Moulana says: When someone is inspired with knowledge from the unseen, it is a sure sign that from Allah's side there is a special glance of generosity and grace upon him. Moulana describes it in this way:

"When on the banks of a river you notice greenery,
Then from far off you can be certain that there is water in this place."
Allah says: "The faces of my Messenger's companions are covered
With a veneer of Noor from their hearts
And this Noor is an indication of much Ibaadah and Istigfaar."

He then, in another couplet, mentions another example viz. That the greenery of the meadows denote the fact that rain has fallen in that place.

"If by night rain fell while you were asleep and unaware of it having fallen,
Then in the morning if you see the garden luxuriant and fresh,
You should understand that last night rain fell.
Every beautiful garden's freshness
Is an indication of rain having fallen."

The story continues:

The mouse told the frog: *"Brother, I am a creature living on dry land and you are living in the water. I am unable to enter the water, but you are able to come to the dry land. But how will you be able to know inside the water that I have a desire to meet you?"* For quite a time they discussed the problem and consulted each other. Finally, the mouse put forward a suggestion that one end of a piece of string the frog should tie to its leg and the other end to the foot of the mouse. Thus when the mouse had a desire to meet the frog he will pull the string. In the water the frog will feel the pulling of the string and thus come to the bank of the river. In this way they will be able to meet each other.

The frog considered the mouse's suggestion to be a bad one and said to himself: *"This evil minded one wishes to tie me up."*

"It is no surprise if a blind one falls into a well,
Surprising when a seeing one falls into it."

In spite of disliking the mouse's suggestion, the frog found an inclination within himself to accede to the request. When a person's desire overpowers his reason, it becomes the beginning of that persons downfall.

Moulana then proceeded to relate the story of the destruction of the frog. The two of them, by pulling the string, were able to enjoy the ecstasy of meeting each other repeatedly. Then one day the result of this bad company became a reality. A vulture came along and carried the mouse off in its claw. As the vulture flew off with the mouse, he also lifted the frog out of the water where up to now he was safe and comfortable, because the other end was tied to the frogs leg. What happened to the mouse also happened to the frog. The vulture killed both of them and ate them up. If the frog had remained in the water and not formed a friendship with the evil mouse, then nothing would have happened to him and he would have remained safe.

LESSON

In this story Moulana has drawn our attention to the harm of bad company. It is a good story with a powerful moral lesson. In the story we see the soul, the self and the Shaytaan. The *"Nafs-e-Ammaarah"* is the evil mouse. The soul is the frog which lives in the water of Allah's nearness, which is its proper place. The vulture represents the Shaytaan or devil.

The Nafs - (Self) in order to satisfy its desires tries to engage the soul in evil doings and endeavours to tie it with a string. Where the soul obeys the desires of the Self and makes contact with the Self, then Shaytaan will pull it along wherever it wishes. In this way the soul is also humiliated because of its contact with the *'Self'*. Hence, when the Shaytaan will go to hell, the Nafs (Self) which was in its claws will also go to hell accompanied by the soul as well, which had befriended the self in evil.

May Allah grant us the ability to learn a lesson from this story and may He grant us protection against the Self and the Shaytaan in the following manner:

(a) No matter what pleasure from sins the Self places in front of us, do not even turn your attention to those sins. Consider the Nafs as a very big enemy. It is an even bigger enemy than Iblees.

(b) When the whisperings of Shaytaan come to you, continue to recite *'Laa Howla Walaa Qoowata Illa Billaah'*. Live in the shadow and company of a Saintly Sheikh and derive benefit from his knowledge and instructions. Remember that Shaytaan's control only comes when our soul makes a mutual agreement with the *'Nafs'*. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance for us to oppose the accursed *'Nafs'* with the aim of avoiding the mischief of Shaytaan. The one who will conquer his *'Self'* will Insha-Allah conquer the Shaytaan. The conquest of the *'Self'* is not an easy task. Unless one forms a close contact with a saintly spiritual guide. Close contact here means a relationship of love and respect, choosing the guide in accordance with one's temperament. Close contact also means acting upon the instructions of the Sheikh, informing him of your spiritual state and consulting him for advise. In a couple of days time a complete transformation will take place for the better. The Sheikh must be one following the Shariah in all actions and one whose Islaah was made by some *"Kaamil"* Sheikh.

"Neither from books, nor from preaching nor from wealth
Deen comes alive from the glances of the Saintly ones."

(Akbar Ilahabadi)

THE STORY OF THE PARROT AND THE SHOPKEEPER

A certain shopkeeper kept a parrot as a pet. The parrot was green in colour and had a very melodious voice. The shopkeeper had a great love for the parrot. The parrot used to speak a lot and entertain the clients in the shop.

One day the shopkeeper had gone out. It so happened that a cat was trying to catch a mouse. The parrot got the impression that the cat was trying to attack him and thus fled to one side, to avoid being caught. As it did so, a bottle of almond oil which was placed there, fell down and the oil spilled over. When the shopkeeper came back, he noticed the oiliness on the floor mat and immediately realised that the almond oil had been spilled.

He became so angry that he struck the parrot on its head a number of times. This action of his caused the parrot's head to become bald. The parrot became so displeased with the shopkeeper that from that day onwards it stopped talking.

The parrot's silence caused the shopkeeper great anguish. He was very sorry and wondered what to do in order to make the parrot speak again, as its speech had provided him with great pleasure up to then. For many days he tried to please the parrot through flattery, but the parrot remained silent. He fed the parrot with various kinds of fruit in order to make him happy, but still the parrot would not speak. Even the clients who came to the shop, were surprised at the parrot's silence and were sorry at this state of affairs.

One day a beggar, covered in a blanket and having a bald head went past the shop. On seeing the bald-headed beggar the parrot spoke in a loud voice: *"O bald-headed one, how did you become bald? You must have also caused a bottle of oil to spill over"*.

Through this analogy drawn by the parrot, people began laughing that the parrot had compared the bald-headed beggar to himself and had drawn such a conclusion.

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) returns to the story and gives the advise:

"O Loved One, do not compare the cases of Saintly people with yourself.
For although 'sheir' (milk) and 'sher' (lion) are spelt the same (in Urdu), they are both different things
'Sheir' (milk) is something consumed by men
And 'sher' (lion) is an animal which consumes men.
The whole world has strayed because of these wrong comparisons
And seldom are people aware of the Saint's and Abdaal's positions.
People of ill-fortune are deprived of eyes, which are able to perceive the truth.
Good and evil appears the same in their eyes.

Through their wrong analogies, they have claimed equality with the Prophets
And at times have considered the Saints as their equals.
And if someone objected, they would say: We are men and so are they.
We both are forced to eat and sleep. So what difference is there between them and us?"

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) explains that if the outer form of two things are the same, then it does not necessarily mean that they are the same in all aspects. He then explains the difference through a few examples.

1. Both the wasp and the bee suck nectar from the flowers. Both of them feed on the same thing. However the wasp merely produces a poisonous sting while the bee produces sweet honey.
2. You will find two kinds of deer feeding on the same type of grass. In the one type of deer the grass creates dung while in the other type of deer it produces fragrant musk.
3. Two kinds of bamboo are being fed with water from the same watering place. The one ends up being hollow, while in the other, that water produces sugar, as in sugar cane.
4. An evil doing person eats bread and that bread creates within him stinginess, jealousy and evil desires. That same bread is also eaten by a Saint, but Divine Love and Knowledge is created within him.
5. Outwardly brackish water and sweet water appear to be the same but how much different are they? Similarly, one of ill-fortune and one of good-fortune appear the same. When we see the outward form of a righteous one and an evil one they are the same, but are they the same in their life style and manners.
6. Whatever a man does, an ape can also do but how different

is a man from an ape?

7. In a similar manner, ignorant ones have looked at miracles and compared them with sorcery. A miracle is in fact from the Mercy of Allah which is granted to the Saintly ones, whereas sorcery is Allah's curse which comes through the evil-minded and rejected ones.
8. Outwardly, the deeds of a believer and a hypocrite appear to be the same, but in actual fact there is a vast difference between the two. How great is the difference in the results of both? The former leads to paradise and the latter leads to Hell fire.
9. Pure and impure gold both have the same appearance, but when both of them are put to the test, see how different the value of one is from the other.

LESSON:

The lesson here is that one should not compare oneself with the Saints of Allah. Look at their inner conditions of nearness to Allah and contact with Him, which is the envy of all the Kings of this world. Derive benefit from them and do not consider them to be like yourself.

The value of a container depends upon its contents. So is the body of man. If it is honoured with great contact with Allah, then that body is considered very precious. Let us take two bottles. Each bottle is worth a mere rupee. In the one bottle we fill perfume which is worth five thousand rupees and the other one we fill with water. This second bottle will be worth just that one rupee while the other one will be worth five thousand rupees. If urine is filled in it, it will then not even be worth the one rupee. So how can it be correct to compare the one bottle to the other?

May Allah grant us the ability to honour and respect the greatness of His righteous Saintly servants and save us from drawing foolish analogies and comparisons, so that we may benefit from their teachings and also acquire the eagerness to learn from them. May our wrong perceptions not be an obstacle towards acquiring benefit from them, Ameen.

THE STORY OF THE UNGRATEFULNESS OF NAMROOD

Allah once asked Izraeel (the Angel of Death): *"Of all the people whose souls you had to take hold of, whom did you pity the most?"*

He replied: *"Over all of them my heart is filled with grief but in the carrying out of Your orders, I submit myself"*.

Allah asked: *"But on which occasion did your heart feel most grief?"*

He replied: *"O Lord, there was one occasion when my heart was very much filled with pity and compassion. Once on Your command when the waves of the sea were very strong and high, we broke a boat into pieces. Then You commanded that all those on board should be drowned except one woman and her baby. All of them died except the woman and her child, who remained alive on a raft. The waves of the sea caused the raft to be driven along until the wind caused the raft to be brought near the coast. I was very pleased to see that they were near safety. Then the order came from You that the mother's soul be snatched from her, while the baby should be left alone. At Your command, I took the soul of the mother and the two of them were parted by death. You can well imagine how unpleasant it must have been for me. You can imagine what passed through my heart at that time. You know all that, but I was under Your command and obeyed. Who is there that can rebel against Your command?"*

"No one has the right to demand the why and wherefore of Your commands and decisions. To You alone is the true Kingdom and decision".

Izraeel continued: *"O Lord, on taking the soul of the mother, I felt great sorrow and to this day, I have not forgotten the helplessness of* *that baby and its destitution"*

Allah replied: *"Now listen to what happened to that baby afterwards. Listen to how I reared that child. I commanded the waves to throw that baby in such a forest where there are lilies, sweet-smelling plants and fragrant flowers and where there are fruit trees and fountains bringing forth sweet waters. There I reared him. Numerous birds with beautiful voices used to sing beautiful melodies in his presence. I made his bed from the leaves of the wild rose tree so that he may be safe from all trials. I commanded the sun not to shine on him with strong rays and to be considerate of him. I commanded the wind to blow over him gently and kindly. I commanded the clouds not to let the rain fall on him. Lightening was commanded not to strike him. The season of autumn was commanded not to remove the moderate weather from his garden. The result was that the garden where he lived was like the soul of the saintly ones protected against cold, violent winds and warm pestilential winds.*

I commanded a leopard, to give this baby milk to drink and the leopard did this until the baby grew into a grown-up child. When the time came for it to stop drinking milk, I commanded the Jinns to teach him how to speak and to teach him the ways of government. In this way, I reared and nourished him, which was wonderful and astonishing. So is My handling strange and wonderful.

I nourished the worms in the body of Nabi Ayoob (A.S.) and granted him such feeling for the worms just like a father over his children, so much so that when a worm came out of his body, he used to feel as if his children were being separated from him.

"I gave to Ayoob feelings of sympathy like a father,
Acting like a host to worms without any harm to them".
"I taught all mothers what love is,
What a lamp that is, which I have enlightened"

"Thus, I showed that child My numerous favours and numerous ways of My grace so that he could see My grace and generosity without adopting any means. This was done to prevent him from becoming

involved with the problem of looking for the means, because sometimes the causes of the means are different. Further, I did all that so that the child should in future seek help from Me alone, because the Provider of means was not hidden behind veils and curtains." In other words, to be nourished and reared without any means would entail that he should not look towards anyone else, so that he should have no excuse to go astray. He will not be able to provide the excuse that by having looked at the means, he failed to pay attention to Allah's favours and bounties.

"But, O Izraeel, how did that child show gratitude to Me? That child became Namrood and he was the one who wanted to burn my Khaleel, Ibraheem (A.S.), alive. That was his intention but Allah made that fire of Namrood a rose - garden of safety."

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: This nafs (self) is a very dangerous enemy. One should always seek refuge from it. For others, the nourishment by the mother and the father becomes a curtain, but this unfortunate one used to receive many pearls from Us directly.

"This nafs is a fierce wolf of prey,
So on every friend will he place the blame for going astray.
This I say, O poor servant of Allah, do not set free the chained dog
Control the nafs and should you be overcome,
Develop contact with a saintly one
So that through his company and duah you may succeed.
But search for such a guide who is awake in all situations
So that you too may become awake
And if you should remain in the company of the vanquished,
You too will become vanquished".

In other words, as is the company you keep, so will be the effects upon you, as the company is a seed. Whatever seeds you plant so will be the trees that will grow.

THE WISDOM OF HAZRAT LUQMAAN (A.S.)

The story is told that when Luqmaan's (A.S.) Master bought him, the other slaves looked upon him as being despicable. One day the Master sent all of them into the garden to pick fruit. All the slaves started eating the fruit. They ate to their heart's delight and went to inform the Master that Hazrat Luqmaan (A.S.) had eaten the fruit. This made the Master very much displeased with Luqmaan (A.S.).

Hazrat Luqmaan (A.S.) advised the Master: *"Please investigate this matter thoroughly. I did not eat the fruit. I will tell you of a plan which will prove who the culprits were. The whole truth will become clear to you. Make preparations for hunting"*.

From the stable the Master ordered that horses be brought. The Master sat down on his horse. Then Hazrat Luqmaan (A.S.) said: *"Proceed speedily in the direction of the desert. But before you proceed give every one of the slaves, warm water to drink. Let everyone drink himself to the full with warm water. Very soon you will discover who the real culprits are"*.

The result was that when those who had eaten the fruit were forced to run along, the quick movements caused them to start vomiting. That was because after drinking hot water, the fast movements caused their stomachs to become even more heated. Moreover the path they trod which led to the desert was an uneven one, with ups and downs. This made vomiting unavoidable. In the vomit, the signs of their having eaten the fruit was quite clear, because the time which passed since they had eaten was too short for the fruit to be digested. Hazrat Luqmaan (A.S.) did not vomit as there was no fruit in his stomach.

Through the wise plan of Hazrat Luqmaan (A.S.) all the slaves were put to shame and were embarrassed. The Master became very pleased with the wisdom of the plan and as a result

Luqmaan (A.S.) became a favourite of the Master.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"When such is the wisdom of Luqmaan (A.S.),
Imagine the wisdom of the True Master of all".

THE STORY OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF "AH!"

A certain saintly man used to always perform his salaah with the congregation, in the mosque. One day as usual he went to the mosque for salaah. As he reached the door of the mosque, he heard the voice of the Imam saying: *"Assalaamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullah"* indicating that the congregational salaah had ended. Realising that he had missed the congregational salaah, the pious man was so filled with sorrow that he sighed: *"Ah!"* It was such a sigh that came right from the depths of his heart.

"The saintly man missed the Jamaat and 'Ah!' was uttered in sorrow
And in his 'Ah' the blood of his heart could be smelt".

Inside the mosque there was another saintly one who had a spiritual sight. When he came out of the mosque he saw a shining light, which went right up to the throne of Allah. He discovered that the noor was the sigh of the person who had missed the congregational prayer. He said to the pious one: *"Hazrat give me that 'Ah!' and in exchange accept my salaah which was performed with the congregation".*

The saint did not at the time understand the real value of his *"Ah!"* and exchanged it for the salaah with Jamaat. That night the other saint saw a dream wherein a voice from heaven said to him: *"O man, you have purchased and acquired the water of life, the water of health and have made a very good exchange in getting that 'Ah!' because that sigh was uttered in the fullest sincerity".*

"That night a messenger from on high brought the message
That through that transaction he had acquired the water of life and
of health.

And said: Through this transaction that you have made,
Allah has accepted the salaahs of all mankind of the present time."

LESSON:

From this story we learn the following things:

a) One should not look down upon anyone. Sometimes even a great sinner repents so sincerely, with such a presence of heart and in such a heart-rending manner that this repentance of his becomes superior to all his other deeds, with the result that we do not know from where to where he reaches.

Moulana says:

"Towbah (repentance) is a strange means of conveyance,
It causes one to reach speedily from humbleness and lowliness
Upto acceptance and great heights".

b) From this we also learn that when there are short-comings and faults in our deeds, we should have sorrow, grief and remorse and we should cry before Allah seeking forgiveness and pardon. In the story all that was included in one *"Ah!"*.

c) From this story we also learn the importance of performing our salaah together with the congregation.

THE STORY ABOUT THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON AN ELEPHANT

In a certain country no one had ever seen an elephant. From India the first elephant was brought to this country. It was placed in a dark building where the eyes could not see the dark coloured elephant. Many viewers came along to see the animal. They were allowed to touch the elephant and then draw conclusions as to what an elephant was. According to which part of the elephant they had touched, they drew their conclusions by analogy and in this manner each one had a different opinion.

The one who touched the ear-lobes of the elephant exclaimed: *The elephant was like a huge fan.* The one who touched its back exclaimed: "*The elephant is like a platform*". The one who touched its leg exclaimed: "*No, you are all wrong. This is like a pillar*". The one who touched the trunk of the elephant said: "*According to my opinion, this elephant is long and hollow within*".

So, in this manner all of them had different versions of an elephant. Moulana Rumi (R.A.) now says that if in their hands they had a lamp, all these differences of opinion would have disappeared.

"*If every one of them had a lamp in his hand,*
They would all have been safe from differing".

LESSON:

These days there are much differences of opinion in this world regarding the concept of Allah, Messengership, Prophethood, the aim and object of life on earth and the resurrection. Many people, in this darkened world, independent of the light of revelation try to understand the links between the worldly life and the life of the hereafter. They try to understand the relationship between the Creator and His creation simply and only by using reasoning powers, or who try to understand these things through the reason of him who does not rely on revelation; They are all like those mentioned in this story. Not one of them will be able to reach the truth.

One blind man, whether he tries to tread the path of his own accord or through following another blind one, in both cases he will be treading towards destruction and be deprived of reaching the required destination. If a traveller and guide, are blind - no matter how many they may be, the sum total will still be blindness. Hence, to understand the reality of things, logic and reason alone is not enough. Light of revelation is also required. In the story all those who touched the elephant, were rational beings, only light was missing.

Thus Muslims should not look towards men of science and philosophy to research the affairs of the hereafter and fix the object of human life on earth. Those men of science and philosophy lack the light of revelation and as such they will conclude that man is just a machine which manufactures faeces. They will conclude that the object of this life is merely to eat, drink and exude faeces - nothing else.

The light to which we refer is divine revelation. It is the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The light is the same which was revealed in the Cave of Hira fourteen centuries ago. May Allah protect us from any modern light.

"O new light, may your face be blackened.
In your heart is darkness and your outside is enlightened".

THE VAIN IMAGINATION OF A FLY

A donkey urinated in a certain place. The urine was so much that as it flowed away, blades of grass started flowing with the urine. A fly sat on one of the dry blades of grass as it flowed away on top of the urine. He felt as if he was sailing along on the ocean and imagined the flowing blade of grass to be his boat. In comparison with other flies, he felt himself to be superior. Never before did he feel this superiority. He felt inclined to announce his superiority and high rank and said:

A fly on a blade of grass sailing along in a donkey's urine
Like a ship, shakes his head and announces:
"I have studied the sea and sailed by boat
And in this study have I spent quite a time".

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) explains: Just as this fly is involved with a greatly foolish notion, similarly is the case of the misguided intelligentsia of our age who term their imaginations and wrong thoughts to be research. They consider it insulting and humiliating for them to derive benefit from Divine Revelation. They consider it perfect to invite humanity to those false ideologies. Moulana gives advise to those stupid ones:

"He who with his wrong interpretations turn away from Divine Revelation
Is like that fly on the blade of grass sailing along in the donkey's urine".

This person looks upon his imagination and ideas as his saving grace and means of success, and even tries to make Divine Revelation subject to his own opinions. At every step he is wont to say: *"I think this or that"*, *"My opinion is this...."*. He goes so far as to pass judgement from his opinions on those things in deen on which there is a general consensus of agreement, and those things which are proven through continuous authentic transmission. He even wants to impose his views over the judgements of the Sahaba and their beliefs. Such a person is in the same boat as the fly in this story. Such a person is like the fly flowing along on a blade of grass in the urine of a donkey; imagining that he is an expert sailor.

Thereafter Moulana Rumi (R.A.) shows the way how such a person can reform himself:

"If the fly does not enter wrong interpretation into his opinion.
And repent from wrong interpretations.
Fate will make that fly become blessed".

In other words, the fly will become so full of blessings that he will be saved from having to sit on faeces and from being mixed with impurities. He will then enter the ranks of the pure ones.

The author of these lines says that Moulana's reference in this Couplet is to the Quranic verse:

"And conjecture avails nothing against truth":

And the verse

"And follow the path of him who returns (in repentance) to Me".

THE STORY ABOUT THE TREATMENT FOR A TANNER

One day a skin tanner was passing by perfume shops in the market place. He had been all the time involved with the tanning of animal skins and had become used to the bad smell of the skins. He now happened to pass the shops selling scents. As he got the fragrant smell of the scents, he could not bear it, as he had been used to living in a bad smelling environment and bad smells had become second nature to him.

When he smelt the fragrant scents from the perfume shops, he fell down unconscious on the road. A big crowd of people gathered around him. One was reciting some Wazifa and blowing over him in an effort to revive him. Another was sprinkling rose water over him. Another was massaging the palms of his hands and feet. In spite of all these efforts, he did not recover and seemed to be sinking deeper into unconsciousness.

His brother heard what had happened and came running along. He smelt the fragrant scents and immediately understood that the scents were the cause of his unconsciousness. He announced: *"Let no rose water be sprinkled over him. And let no fragrant smelling scents be brought near him"*. The brother went away from the scene for a short while. He brought some faeces of a dog, hidden in the sleeve of his shirt. Moving through the crowd he came to his brother and held the dog's dung to his nose. The bad smell of the dung immediately revived him. The people were surprised and were wondering what strong perfume the brother had brought, which was not even found in those perfume selling shops.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"His brother came along with dog's faeces hidden in his sleeve
And forcing his way through the crowd came to his brother.

He brought his head near to the brother as if to tell him a secret
And then brought the dog's dung to his nose and he was revived".

LESSON:

Those who become perplexed and agitated at the sweet-smell of Allah's and His Rasool ﷺ's obedience and those who are not inclined to a life of following the Sunnat, should be considered as having the same sickness as the tanner in the above story. In their dirty way of life and the dirty environment of sinful living, they spend a whole lifetime, so that their heart and brains become familiar with those things and are inclined towards them.

The treatment of getting them to change that life is to slowly, step by step, get them out of that environment of sin and to make them wander around in the fragrant gardens. They should be brought to the gatherings of the saintly ones and into their company. After frequenting these places for a couple of days, they will say: *"In what dirty environment were we?"* Then thinking about the life of the past, they would cry and sigh and will be very grateful for the company of the righteous ones. Now gradually there noses will become used to the fragrant scents (i.e. in the love and service of Allah) and will be able to say:

"It is as if day and night I am living in paradise,
All these flowers are embroidered on the garden of my heart".

THE STORY OF THE BEWITCHED PRINCE

A certain King had only one son. The boy was quite handsome and had a good character. It was the King's desire and intention to have the son married to a beautiful princess and in this regard he started talking to a religiously minded and righteous family. At this stage the prince's mother started having second thoughts. She said to her husband: *"You are looking at righteousness and fear of God, but you do not see that these people are inferior to you as far as honour, respect and wealth are concerned".*

The King replied:

"Begone, O Foolish One, he who chooses the sorrow of concern of Deen, Allah will remove all other worldly cares from Him".

EXPLANATION:

The cares of the hereafter are like the staff of Nabi Moosa (A.S.), which swallows all the snakes of the sorcerers. Similarly, the sorrows and concern for the hereafter, swallows all the sorrows of the world. In this respect let us look at the couplets of the humble author of these lines:

"You will be freed from the cares of both worlds,
If you have concern in you for the hereafter".

At last, the King managed to persuade his wife towards his view and the marriage of the prince took place to the beautiful princess. After the marriage, they waited a long time but there was no sign of the princess bringing forth any offspring. This caused the King great worries. He was thinking: *"What is wrong? This princess is pretty and young. Why is she not becoming pregnant?"*

The King gathered his advisors and consulted secretly with the Ulama and saintly ones. At last it was discovered that the prince was under a spell from an old woman who had bewitched him. The effect of the witchcraft was that he was feeling great dislike and aversion towards his wife and used to go to the ugly old woman. For quite a time, as a result of this witchcraft practised on him, he was in love with the ugly old woman.

When he heard this, the King was very sad and displeased. He immediately started giving a lot of charity and fell into prostration, crying bitterly before his Lord. Before he could stop crying, a man from the unseen appeared before him and said: *"Come with me to the graveyard"*. The King followed him to the graveyard. There they went to a very old grave and dug into it. Then he dug up and showed the King a hair with a hundred knots on it - articles of witchcraft - on which sorcery had been practiced, and then been buried there. The man blew upon every knot and opened it. As he did this, the young prince became healed of his ailment. As soon as the last knot was opened, the prince was saved from the love he felt for the old woman. His eyes gained proper sight and he no longer detested his wife. He stopped looking at the old woman with eyes filled with love, in fact he felt great dislike and aversion for her.

When he now looked at his young and beautiful wife, he was so struck by her beauty that he fell down unconscious. Slowly he regained his senses and gradually he was able to bear her beauty.

Moulana now tells his lessons from this story: He says: "O people, you are like that prince and this world is like that ugly old woman who has bewitched the lovers of this world. As a result of this spell they fall in love with the outside appearance of this temporary life, while turning their backs towards Allah, Rasulullah ﷺ and towards the life of the hereafter.

In actual fact, the reality of this world is as much as Hazrat Majzoob (R.A.) says:

"Actually it is a picture of devastation although appearing like being built up.
That is its only reality, a mere dream and deceit
That man's eyes are closed and man a mere fiction".

Haroun-al-Rashid's son, who discarded his father's Kingdom and chose a life of poverty, shortly before his death spoke to a friend of his, in these words:

"The world says: O, my friend, do not become deceived by my pleasures,
For life is ending and the pleasures will end.
And when you carry a corpse to the grave,
Then remember that after him you too will be carried".

We learn from this story that the treatment for the person whose eyes have become bewitched by this world is:

(1) to have a sincere and deep love for the Saints of Allah,

(2) to remember death at all times,

(3) to stay in the company of the saintly ones as much as possible,

(4) to discard own opinions and to listen attentively to their instructions and to act accordingly,

(5) to perform two rak'ahs salaah, beg forgiveness and beseech Allah for His guidance.

THE STORY OF THE SINCERITY OF HAZRAT ALI رضي الله عنه

There is a very well known story concerning the sincerity of Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه. It is said that once, while fighting with a non-believer, he managed to overpower him and was sitting on top of him ready for the final blow of his sword. At that moment the non-believer spat in his face. This act of the disbeliever made Ali رضي الله عنه feel very much displeased. However, he placed the sword back into its sheath and got off from him. In other words he immediately refrained from killing him, although he had all the opportunity to do so.

As he separated himself from the enemy, the disbeliever shouted at him: *"O Ameerul- Mumineen! What is this? After I had insulted you by spitting in your face, you should have killed me immediately. You had me at your mercy and completely subdued and subjugated. What is it that stopped you from killing me?"*

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه replied: *"I had the intention of killing you solely for the pleasure of Allah. When you spat in my face, you stirred up my anger. If I had killed you then, this act of mine would have been out of the anger of my nafs and not out of sincerity to Allah. Allah does not accept any deed which is not done out of sincerity. Killing you at that time would have been against sincerity. Hence I refrained from killing you"*.

Hearing these words from Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه, the enemy was astonished and the light of Imaan was lit in his heart: *"I consider it my good fortune to accept such a Deen, O Ameerul-Mumineen, where* *such a teaching of sincerity is expounded. This Deen is undoubtedly the true Deen".*

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Learn the lesson of sincerity from Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه
And consider the Lion of Truth to be free of deceit.
During Jehad he overpowered a non-believing fighter
And removed his sword from the sheath in order to kill.
The non-believing enemy spat in the face of him.
Who was the beloved of Allah, Rasulullah ﷺ and all the Saints.
Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه replaced his sword in the sheath
And refrained from killing the enemy.
The non-believer was astonished at this.
He was surprised at the enemy's pardon and mercy.
He said: "With such speed you took out the sword
But why did you replace the sword in the sheath and leave me alone?
How is the mercy and pardon at a time of anger
When a serpent subdues someone, why would it leave its prey?"
Ali رضي الله عنه replied:
"I am the Lion of God, not the Lion of my lustful desires.
This act of mine, is a witness and an indication of the truth of my religion.
When you spat in my face, my nafs cried out for revenge.
At that time my nature and disposition was destroyed.
At that time half the act would be for God and the other half as revenge for myself.
And any deed done for God should not be divided between Him and another
And should be done solely for Him".

The disbelieving enemy replied:
"I am a spreader and sower of injustice and evil,
But I consider you as a highest form of humanity".

The result of this story was that the non-believer became blessed with embracing Islam.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"The sword of clemency is sharper than the sword of iron in effect. In fact, in being victorious, clemency is more effective than numerous armies".

LESSON

From this story we learn a very great lesson about sincerity in deeds. Whatever deed a person does, he should correct his intention. If sincerity is present, worldly acts also become religious acts. For example, a person for the sake of earning halaal shouts: *'Here, buy guavas, buy mangoes!'* His intention is to earn halaal sustenance to feed his wife and children according to the command of Allah and His Rasulullah ﷺ. In such a case, for every time he shouts *'Buy guavas, buy mangoes'*, he is being rewarded.

On the other hand if he says: *"Subhaanallah, Subhaanallah!"* with this intention that the people should look upon him as a holy man and put their wealth in his trust, whereby he will acquire worldly things, then in such a case his *"Subhaanallah"* will be a worldly act and not a deeny act.

Hence Ikhlaas (sincerity) is very important. Otherwise there is the danger that all deeds may become destroyed. In order to learn sincerity, it is necessary that we learn it from a sincere person. This great gift is best learnt from the saints of Allah and from their company. It is not acquired merely from books. Book knowledge and the company of the saintly, both these things are necessary. Those who are blessed with the company of the elders also learn a lot and also become beloved of the people while those who only depend on book knowledge and do not stay in the company of the saintly ones can never become properly reformed beings. The reason for this is that purification is a transitive action of one on another person and for this act a purifier is required.

The Quran speaks about
"And he purifies them".

In this verse the purifier is Rasulullah ﷺ and the purified are the Sahabah (R.A.). This shows that the Sahabah (R.A.) were not able to purify themselves although that was the blessed era of Rasulullah ﷺ. At that time the Quran was being revealed and Jibreel was coming and going among them. So how can anybody today say: *"We consider our studies of books enough for our reformation and rectification"*. Such people's hearts will fully understand that such a talk is merely meaningless and foolish pretence. In actual fact, laziness of the self and love of this world and of the high rank are the things that keeps one away from visiting a saintly spiritual guide, for self-rectification.

The immediate pleasures and grandeur of this world is preferred above the promised life of the hereafter. The nafs reigns supreme and one has not the ability to resist and oppose it. The actual reason for this is the fact that there is a lack of desire in us for Allah and for this reason we are satisfied with a little deen in our lives, but we are not satisfied with a little of this world. Night and day we make plans as to how we can acquire more of this worldly wealth.

Imam Ghazali (R.A.) says:
"I see the Kings of this world satisfied with little deen,
But not satisfied with a little of this world
So now, with Your deen become independent of the King's world,
Just as they with their dunya show disinterest in the hereafter".

THE STORY OF THE TRADER AND THE CAPTIVE PARROT

A certain trader had a parrot which had a melodious voice and was very beautiful. Before the trader went on a journey to India, he asked all his servants: *"What shall I bring for you from*

India?" In this way he also inquired from the parrot as to what he shall bring for it from India. He asked the parrot what message it wanted delivered to the parrots of India.

The parrot replied: *"In India when you shall pass any meadow and see any group of parrots, give them my salaams and pass this message onto them:*

"A certain parrot longs to meet you
But through the decree of Allah, he is a captive in a cage".

The parrot said further:

"After passing my salaams to them, say:
Is this acceptable to you that he should be restless in longing for you
And that he should in this restless state come to the end of his life."

He also said:

"And tell them:'For how long is it going to be acceptable to you
That he should continue to be imprisoned
While you can fly about in the greenery and from tree to tree?
Is this the faithfulness of friends that he should remain a captive?
While you are free to roam among the gardens?
The remembrance of friends by friends is a blessed thing
Especially when between them lies the relationship of Layla and Majnoon".

When the trader passed the message onto the parrots of India they also gave him their regards. When one of the parrots heard the message, she started shaking. She fell down from the branch of the tree and landed on the ground dead. The trader felt great grief that the parrot had died. He felt that if he did not pass on the message it would have been better.

After having seen to his business, he returned from India. He distributed the presents which he had bought for the servants. Then the parrot asked him: *"And what message did the parrots from the forests of India have for me? Whatever you have seen or heard, you should tell me".*

The trader replied:

"I passed your complaints onto your parrot friends
Who shared in your sorrows.
But there was one parrot among them who was greatly affected,
So much so that it could not bear it and started trembling and died.
When the parrot heard what happened to the one parrot,
He also began trembling and fell down cold".

When the trader saw this, he began crying: *"Oh, what is this? What has happened?"*

The trader said:

"Alas! O melodious voiced bird,
Alas! O my Companion, my Confidant!"

Thereafter when the trader imagined that the parrot had died of sorrow, he took it out of the cage and threw it outside. The parrot flew away and sat on a high branch of a tree. The trader looked up towards it and asked: *"Tell me what is this? Explain to me the meaning of this".*

The parrot replied: *"That parrot has through its action made itself dead and taught me a lesson, that my freedom and deliverance can be attained in this manner i.e. pretend to be a dead one.* Then the parrot greeted the trader and said to him: *"Farewell".*

The parrot said:

"O master, I have taken the direction to my home-land.
I now leave you. May God free you also from the chains of your nafs like me.
So that like me you too will fly around in the nearness of God".

The trader said:

"Go in the safety of Allah, go to your home-land.
You have taught me also the way towards freedom.
Is my life inferior to the parrots that I be a captive in a prison
And a slave in the chains of my desires.
And deprived of Allah's nearness.
Thus my life should be such

That it flies to its true garden, free from bonds".

LESSON:

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) has mentioned this story to inform us that the parrot did not find freedom from the prison of his cage through long speeches and high shouting, nor through a claim of arrogance. He found his freedom through annihilating himself and through self sacrifice. Thus when someone wishes to free himself from the cage of his *'nafs'* and from Shaytaan, he will have to learn to become annihilated and to learn the process of self- annihilation from one who is annihilated in Allah. This is so because the one who is himself imprisoned cannot set free another prisoner. The Saints of Allah are people who have been released from the cage. By choosing their companionship and company, others can also find freedom and relief.

THE ROMANS AND THE CHINESE IN DECORATING

Once some Chinese told a King: *"We are very well known for our ability to decorate and adorn buildings"*. Then some Romans said: *"We are able to produce more splendid decorations and adornments"*. Thereupon the King said: *"All right, we shall test your abilities to see who is best"*.

"The Romans and the Chinese came before the King,
While the Romans were noted for being more knowledgeable".

Then the Chinese told the King: *"Give us a house so that we may decorate it. Let the house be hidden behind a curtain so that these Romans cannot copy or imitate our decorations"*. According to these conditions they started decorating the house in their own excellent manner.

Then the Romans said: *"We shall prepare a decorated house of our own, just opposite the spot where the Chinese shall work, so that you may easily ascertain by comparing the two houses, as to whose* *work is better"*

The Romans also started working behind a curtain in a secret way. However, they did not make any decorated paintings. They merely started cleaning and polishing the wall of the house until in the end the wall of the house started shining like a mirror.

Then came the time of the test. The curtains were removed and the result was that the beautiful paintings and pictures in the house of the Chinese became reflected on the wall of the Romans so that their art appeared more beautiful. The King came along.

"He saw the decorations made by the Chinese.
So beautiful were they that they drove the mind away.
Thereafter the King inspected the Romans' decorations
And was astonished at what he saw.
Whatever the king saw on the other side, here appeared more beautiful.
So that through the efforts of decorating, the eyes were popping out of their sockets".

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) compared the work of the Romans to that done by the Saintly ones because these Saintly ones place great emphasis upon cleansing the heart and through the blessings of that, without studying books and revision, they become decorated with beautiful character.

"However, the Saintly ones cleanse and polish their hearts profusely
Whereby greed, stinginess and enmity is removed from it.
One Saint says:
Our law is to keep the heart like a mirror, clean and free of dust.
And our way is this, that to retain malice therein, is a major crime".

LESSON:

It was always the way of our elders to pay much attention to *"takhliyah"* - to keep the heart free of the love of anyone other than Allah. Thereafter it becomes easier to reform and rectify bad characteristics in one's self. This they placed before the acquisition of good characteristics. Hence, they first inculcated the making of Zikr and by lighting the fire of Divine Love, they caused all other entities to become burnt from the heart. Thereafter it became easier to act upon every command of Allah and to discard all sinful activities. This is the easy and quick way to success.

THE STORY OF THE REPENTANCE OF HAZRAT NASOOH

There was once a man called Nasooh. Although a man, but his outward form and voice was like that of a woman. In the King's palaces, he was appointed to wash the ladies and daughters of the King and to cleanse them. He always used to dress in woman's clothing and was accepted as a maid servant and worker.

Because he was a man and had all the lustful passions of a man, he used to enjoy all these passions and desires while massaging and washing the ladies of the King's household. On various occasions he repented of his acts and lifestyle, but soon after, his 'self' used to coerce him into breaking his towbah. One day he heard that a certain holy man had arrived and he also went to meet him. He went into the presence of the holy man and asked him to also remember him in his prayers. The saintly man made duah.

"The duah of the holy man reached above the seven heavens.
And through that Nasooh was successful.
The Lord of Glory and Honour created a means for his salvation"

It so happened that Nasooh and all the other female servants had to be searched. In the female section of the King's palace, a very precious and costly pearl was lost. The door to the female section of the house was closed and the search began. When the pearl was not found, an announcement was made:

"That all the maid servants should become undressed,
Whether they were young maidens or old women".

As he heard this announcement, Nasooh started trembling, as he was in actual fact a man, who for a long time had been acting as a woman, with no one knowing about it. The thought went through his mind: "Today I am going to be disgraced. The King will surely out of his sense of honour and shame, take revenge upon me. That means he will punish me with death. My crime is a very serious one.

"Out of fear, Nasooh went into privacy.
His face became pale, his lips turned blue from fear.
Nasooh saw death in front of his eyes
And shaking like a leaf, he fell down into prostration.
He said: O Lord, many times have I chosen the wrong path.
Many times did I repent and many times did I break my repentance.
O Lord, do that which is suitable for Your High Rank.
For from every hole, snakes are biting me.
If the search for the pearl passes the servants and reaches me,
Then how great will be the calamity that will befall me?
This time cover me up O! Allah. I seek forgiveness and repent
From every improper act of mine."
Nasooh was talking to Allah thus and said:
"O, my Lord, in my heart numerous flames of sorrow are burning
And You see the blood of my liver in my supplication to You.
And see in which state of destitution and pain I pray to You".

Nasooh was busy crying before Allah in this manner when he heard a voice saying to him:

"All have been searched. O Nasooh, come forward and undress, that
we may search you".

As Nasooh heard this announcement he realised, by becoming undressed his secret will be exposed. He was so struck by fear that he fell down unconscious and his soul started flying about in the celestial regions. His soul went near to Allah while he was unconscious. At that time the mercy of Allah started boiling and through the command of Allah the pearl was found, before Nasooh could be searched. This saved Nasooh from any humiliation and disgrace.

Nasooh regained consciousness and his eyes appeared much more enlightened than before. In other words, while he was unconscious, the mercy of Allah caused his soul to experience the nearness of Allah and the light shining in his eyes was from that experience.

The ladies of the King's household came to him and apologised to him and in soft terms begged his pardon for having had suspicions about him. They said: *"Pardon our suspicions. We are sorry for having caused you so much trouble. We had a wrong suspicion about you and have in our conversation back-bited you. Pardon us".*

Nasooh replied:
"This is the grace of God upon me, O my benefactors.
Whatever was said about me, I am worse than that".

Thereafter one of the King's daughters asked him to bath her. Nasooh had repented and promised to lead a life of righteousness. He had during his unconscious state reached a high place of nearness with Allah. How could he after such contact with Allah and after attaining such Yaqeen in Allah, return to the darkness of sin. He realised that darkness after light was deplorable. He told the King's daughter:
"O daughter, now the strength of my hand has gone,
And I have become indisposed."
In this manner, he saved himself from further sin.
Thereafter he said to himself:
"My crime and fault has proceeded beyond the limit.
How can the fear and sorrow ever leave my heart?
I have made true repentance to my Lord, which I will never break

Even though my life should separate from my body".

LESSON:

From this story the following points of advise are extracted:

1. One should never lose hope over his evil deeds. The Mercy of Allah is powerful enough to bring about rectification in all cases.
2. One should also seek the duahs of the saintly ones, just as Nasooh did. He was successful in his request.
3. In this story there is a great lesson in how at the time of extreme emergency, Nasooh turned to Allah and how he cried lamentfully before Him in dire circumstances.
4. We also see how Nasooh spent a large part of his life in sin. This was a very dangerous situation but Allah in His Mercy, arranged a way out for him, by creating a way towards guidance and granted him the ability to make true and sincere towbah. Then the rank of his towbah, which appears in the last couplet, contains a great lesson for repenters. Nasooh promised that even if it should mean his death, he will not break his towbah. Subhaanallah! What a great promise from Allah's sincere servant, that even if life should be removed from his body, yet he will not in future break his towbah. This is something which points to great rank, great courage and great ambitious nature. May Allah grant us all such towbah and may He guide us to that which He loves and to what pleases Him.

THE STORY OF THE DEBATE OF HAZRAT ALI رضي الله عنه WITH A REJECTER

Once an irreligious one, a rejecter of faith in Allah started a debate with Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه who was sitting on the top storey of a house. The rejecter, a Jew, said to him from below: *"O Ali Murtuza, have you got faith in Allah as your Protector?"*

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه replied: *"Yes, definitely. He is our Protector"*.

The Jew said:
"O Murtuza, throw yourself down from the top storey.
And depend on Allah as Protector to save you from harm.
Do that so that your deep faith may be a means towards my faith
And so that your act become the cause of my sincere belief".

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه replied:
"Since when has a slave the right
To put his Lord to the test?
And since when has a slave the courage.
O Foolish One, to test his Lord?
This is a right due to Allah alone
That at all times, He can test His servants.
If an atom on the side of a mountain, looking at the height of the mountain says:
'I shall weigh you'.
Such atom should think that if it places the mountain on a scale, the scale itself will split.
In this manner foolish ones having pride,
In their foolish notions try to weigh the Saints of Allah on their scale.
When the high rank of the saints cannot be contained in the scales of these fools,
Then because of their behaviour, Allah destroys those scales
And makes them involved with further foolishness".

It is a point of experience that those people who act insultingly to these saints of Allah and object against them, their rational powers become daily deficient and their practical acts become less and less. May Allah protect us against that.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: "When such thoughts and whisperings enter the heart, one should consider it as a sign of ill-fortune and a sign of destruction. In such a case, the following line of action should be followed:

> *"Immediately fall into prostration and begin crying lamentfully*
> *And seek refuge in Allah: O Allah, save me from such thoughts".*

LESSON:

If after towbah and crying before Allah, these thoughts still do not leave the mind, look upon them as whisperings from the Shaytaan. It is necessary that you consider them as bad. Purposely do not turn attention to these thoughts. Within a short while, Insha-Allah, those thoughts will disappear. However, you should always make duah and complain to Allah and ask the saintly ones to pray on your behalf.

THE STORY OF THE CONVERSATION OF HAZRAT MU'AWIYA رضي الله عنه AND IBLEES

One night Hazrat Mu'awiya رضي الله عنه was resting at home fast asleep. Suddenly someone woke him up for prayers. He looked around to find the person who got him up, but the person had disappeared. In surprise he said: *"No one can enter my house at this time. I wonder who could have been so brave".*

Then suddenly a person appeared at the door with his face hidden. He asked him: *"Who are you?"*

The person replied: *"I am known by the notorious name of Iblees, the one of ill-fortune".*

Hazrat Mu'awiya رضي الله عنه asked: *"O Iblees, tell me, why did you wake me up? Tell me the whole truth".*

He replied: *"The time for salaah was running out and was nearly finished. You should hurry to go to the mosque".*

Hazrat Mu'awiya رضي الله عنه said: *"That can never be your object. Since when do you guide towards righteousness? You enter my house like a* *thief and then you come and tell me that you are a watchman over me. How can that be from you, especially you, who is a well-known highway robber. Why would you have so much sympathy for me?"*

Thereupon Iblees replied:

"Previously I was an angel (in my actions)
And gave my life in the path of obedience.
Can a previous profession become removed from the heart
Can previous love be removed from the heart.
I point out for righteous ones the path of righteousness
And welcome evil ones towards the path of evil.
If I awakened you up for the sake of deen,
Then know that that is my original nature".

Hazrat Mu'awia ﵁ said: *"O thief, do not dispute with me! You will not be able to find a way towards leading me astray. So do not search for a way to lead me on the path of evil. Tell me the truth! Why did you wake me up for salaah? You are an inviter towards evil and you are one misguiding people. What is the purpose of your calling towards good?"*

Iblees replied: *"Sire, the truth of the matter is this. If you should have missed your salaah, you would show so much remorse and sorrow before Allah and through this exhibition of sorrow you would become so raised in rank, that I would be burning up with envy and jealousy. For that reason, I thought, it would be better for me to wake you up for salaah".*

"If your salaah should have been missed,
You would with great pain in your heart, sighed in sorrow.
And your sorrow, crying, grief and sadness would make you
Nearer to Allah than two hundred nafal prayers.
For this reason, fearing your attaining such nearness to Allah,
I decided to wake you up.
I woke you up due to this fear
So that your sighing in sorrow and grief will not burn me.
I am jealous of man and this I did through that jealousy

And I am man's enemy and my work is enmity and malice".

Then Hazrat Mu'awiya رضي الله عنه said: *"Now you have spoken the truth and the jealousy and enmity you have shown are things that are fitting for you"*

LESSON:

This story teaches us how much sorrow Shaytaan feels when a person shows grief and sorrow after having committed sins and faults. It also shows how much Allah's Mercy is directed to His bondsmen. May Allah grant us the ability to cry to Him out of grief and sorrow for our sins, Ameen!

THE STORY OF THE GRAMMARIAN AND THE SAILOR

In the Mathnavi, Moulana Rumi (R.A.) tells the story of a grammarian. A certain man noted for his knowledge of grammar once boarded a boat for a voyage. The captain of the boat asked him: *"Sir, in which subject are you an expert?"* He replied: *"I am an expert in the knowledge of grammar. It is a great pity that you have spent your whole life in learning how to sail a boat but did not learn anything about grammar".*

At this reply, the boatsman remained silent. It so happened that according to the decree of Allah, the boat was caught up in a storm in the middle of the ocean. The captain told the grammarian: *"Sir, make use of your knowledge of grammer and save yourself from drowning. The boat is in danger of sinking".*

The grammarian remained silent. Of what use was grammar in such a situation? The sailor also said: *"This is not a time for grammar. It is time to be a swimmer. There is at this time no use of expert knowledge of grammar. It is time to swim your way out of trouble.*

"The water of the ocean carries a corpse on its head
While living ones it drowns"

In other words, by annihilating your *'self'* the road to Allah is discovered. Those who act proudly and arrogantly become destroyed.

Hence in the path of Allah, self-annihilation is most useful. It is of no great benefit to become involved with arguments and debates. Sometimes these debates create arrogance, which prevents one from building a close contact with the saintly ones. May Allah protect us against such deprivation and grant us perfect annihilation of the self, Ameen!

I once asked my Sheikh and Murshid: *"What is annihilation?"*

He replied: *"The meaning of the term 'destruction of the self', and to 'annihilate your self' and to become 'annihilated to Allah' means that a person will discard all his pleasures and desires which are against the commands of Allah. That is what is called 'annihilation of the self'. When a person initially takes the first steps on the path of sulook, this annihilation is accomplished through strenuous spiritual exercises and great difficulty. But in the end, the pleasure of Allah and the acquisition thereof becomes like second nature to a person - much more easy to attain"*.

THE REJECTION BY A PHILOSOPHER

A certain Qari recited a verse from the Holy Quran:

"If the water of your fountain should disappear deep into the ground who has the power to bring it up?"

Allah Taala informs us that He alone has the power to bring back that water after it has sunk to the underground.

"I cause water to become hidden in the depths of the earth.
And cause fountains to dry up, causing water scarcity.
Who else, except Me, can bring back water to the fountains?"

Hearing this verse being recited, a philosopher and logician said: *"I am able to bring back the water"*. That night he saw in a dream a strong man give him a heavy blow in his eyes, as a result of which both eyes were struck with blindness. In the dream, the man said to him:

"O wretched one, bring back the light into the fountains of your eyes
If you are truthful in your claim".

When he awoke from his dream, he found that he was really blind in both eyes.

"If this man sought Allah's pardon and cried before Him,
Then Allah's Mercy would have returned the light to his eyes.
However, the ability to seek pardon and repent does not lie in his hands
And the taste of repentance is not food for every drunken one"

From this story we learn the following lessons:

1. Casting doubt in the words of Allah and His Rasool ﷺ can besides punishment in the hereafter, sometimes be the cause of worldly punishment. This is something that one should greatly fear.
2. One should never commit sins with this idea in mind that afterwards one is going to repent, because the ability to repent does not lie in our hands. It is possible that because of our boldness and audacity and our insulting attitude, the ability and guidance towards repentance can be taken away from us. That could mean that without repentance for sins committed, one can become and remain rejected.

The example of towbah (repentance) is like a person saying: *"This ointment is very beneficial and good for burns."* Relying on this ointment, will a person place his hand in fire? No. The ointment is to be used for accidents. Not that one should purposely burn his hand in fire and then test the ointment. Similarly, for sins and their darkness and the fire which causes damage to the heart, distances one from Allah and causes His displeasure, towbah makes amends. Towbah is the ointment and antidote for the wounds caused by the fire of sins. But to reckon that I am purposely going to commit sin, is just like putting your hand in the fire to test the beneficial nature of the ointment. This is foolish indeed.

One should avoid all sins, even at the cost of his life. To retain this resolute intention, one should make contact with the saints of Allah, choose a good environment and inculcate within oneself the habit of performing Zikr profusely. If in spite of all these efforts to avoid sin, due to human weakness, a sin does occur, then in such a case crying in grief and sorrow and repentance are two very beneficial ointments.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says in one place:

"The vehicle of repentance is a wonderful means of conveyance.
Within a moment it moves us from the lowliness of sin
And takes us for a tour of the celestial bodies.
And he who repents to Allah becomes Allah's beloved,
Reaching Him, cleansed and forgiven".

THE STORY OF HAKEEM JALINOOS

Once Hakeem Jalinoos requested some of his friends to bring a certain medicine from the chemist. The friends told him: *"That is a medicine which is given to mad people to drink. What is wrong with you that you now ask for medicine for madness?"*

Jalinoos replied:

"A mad one stared at me.
For a whole hour that mad one looked at me and was very pleased
Then he winked his eyes and tore his sleeve to pieces.
If I was not of his nature and temperament and if I had no madness in me,
Then why would this ugly one continue to stare at me?
When does a bird fly except with other birds of the same feather?
The company of a contrasting kind, is like a live one in a grave".

Jalinoos said that when a specific attribute becomes a common factor in two different people, then it becomes a cause for mutual friendship and compatibility.

The friends were quite surprised at this knowledge.

They then tried to find out what was the common attribute between Jalinoos and the mad man.When the friends went close to the mad one, they were astonished to note that he too walked with a limp, like Jalinoos.

In other words, this was the common attribute which caused the compatibility between them.

LESSON:

If a person meets a bad person and gets pleased or, a bad person who has no intention of giving up his evil habits, meets him and becomes pleased, then know that some evil in both is the common factor, that has created this pleasure.

Experience has shown that if a person is considered to be pious because of his outward appearance however his association and company and friendship is all the time with the evil doers and materially inclined, then in reality he too is a worldly one and materially inclined, although his outward appearance is that of piety. If he is meeting the evil doers in order that he may invite them towards righteousness then that is an exception.

This is also supported by the Hadith *"Every person is on the Deen (way of Life) of his close friend"*. So if you wish to know about any person's character, then see who his very close friends are.

It is also proven that a person greedy for wealth but unable to acquire it, listens greedily to stories of the rich and their wealth. On the other hand a person desirous of the deeds that gain one eternal happiness, but unable to achieve them due to weakness, still listens greedily to stories of people who achieved spiritual perfection and proximity to Allah Taala and Rasululah ﷺ.

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THE STORY OF RASULULLAH'S ﷺ VISIT TO THE SICK

A companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ fell ill and became very weak. Rasulullah ﷺ went to visit him. He was so ill that he appeared to have reached the last stages of his life. When Rasulullah ﷺ saw the condition, he expressed great sympathy and feeling.

When the sick Sahabi saw Rasulullah ﷺ, he was overjoyed. It appeared as if he was endowed with new life. It was as if a dead person sprung back to life. He said:

"This sickness has made me a very fortunate person
That it became the cause of the King of believers coming to visit me"

He also said:

"O my sickness, my fever, my sorrow, my pain and sleeplessness by night. Blessed be you all. You are the cause of Rasulullah ﷺ coming to visit me today".

Rasulullah ﷺ asked the sick man upon completion of the visit:

"Do you remember any special duah you made during the time of your good health?"

He replied: *"Ya Rasulullah ﷺ, I cannot remember what duah I made"*. Then after a short while through the blessings of Rasulullah ﷺ, he remembered and said: *"Ya! Rasulullah ﷺ! I now remember the duah. It was this:*

"I prayed O Allah in view of my shortcomings
In my deeds and in view of my faults:
I beseech Thee, grant me the punishment
In this world, which You would give in the Hereafter.
So that I may be exempted from punishment in the Hereafter.
This duah I kept making up till this day.
Until the time came that a heavy sickness covered me
And I found myself in distress because of the illness.

Due to this sickness, I am unable to perform my Zikr and Wazifas
As I did in my healthy days.
And now I am unaware of my relatives and good or evil ones".

Hearing this duah, Rasulullah ﷺ showed some displeasure and prohibited him from making such a duah: *"In future do not make such a duah"*. Rasulullah ﷺ declared such a duah does not befit a servant of Allah. He declared it to be against serfdom to Allah. To beg of Allah to send down punishment is tantamount to making the claim that you have the power to withstand Allah's punishment.

Therefore Rasulullah ﷺ advised him:

"O You, what strength do you possess that on a sick ant like yourself
Allah should place a big mountain of calamity?
But pray: O Allah, ease for me my difficulty
So that He may change the thorns of your distress to a garden of comfort.
Grant to us the good of this worldly life,
And grant to us the good of the life of the Hereafter"

LESSON:

This story teaches us never to pray to Allah for calamities. We should at all times pray for our welfare in both the worlds, while admitting before Him our weakness and our inability. For example, if a person has the illness of looking at evil, he should pray for his rectification and should endeavour to treat the malady through consultation with the saintly ones and ask them to pray for him. He should never become distressed and say: "O *Allah, this malady of mine is not good. It would be better if you make me completely blind, so that I am not plagued by the sins of my eyes"*.

Such a duah will be foolishness. As far as possible, one should pray for health, safety, protection from calamities and welfare.

I heard my Sheikh Hazrat Phulpoori (R.A.) say that Hazrat

Mansoor (R.A.) used to perform Nafal Salaah in the sun while there was a place to do so in the shade. A saintly elder endowed with *'nisbat'* said: *"This man will become involved in a great calamity"*. This means that when there is ease in front of you, then do not prefer difficulty. When you have to choose between calamity on the one side and calamity on the other side, then choose the lighter of the two as is mentioned in the Hadith.

THE STORY OF THE ROYAL FALCON

Once a King's falcon flew away from his palace and landed in the house of an old woman of the neighbourhood. The old woman saw the falcon's long nails and its big wings and cut them short, saying: *"With which unworthy person have you lived all this time who kept you like an orphan"*.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: "So is the love of an ignorant person. For a falcon, long nails and huge wings are necessary items, which are considered as its virtues and required in its hunting pursuits. These signs of perfection in the falcon were looked upon as faults by the old woman, due to her ignorance of what constitutes perfection for a falcon. By cutting the nails and wings, she made the falcon useless.

The King, in the meantime, searched for the falcon. One day while searching, he came to the house of the old woman. Seeing the falcon in this state, he began weeping. The falcon saw him and said:

"O King, I am very much ashamed of myself
I repent and now make a new promise and commitment to you".

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) now says:

"The world is like that old woman
That whoever inclines to it is just as disgraced and foolish.
He who befriends an ignorant one, will meet the same fate
As the falcon had met at the hands of the ignorant old woman".

Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) said: "In similar manner some ignorant ones become claimants to being servants of Islam. Then in their ignorance, make Islam subject to their stupid opinions and thereby destort the true teachings of Islam. This is generally true of those people who through their own study later become authors of books and articles on Islam, without having studied deen at the feet of a scholarly teacher. When looking at the writings of these authors, great precaution is required. There is a Hadith in Sahi Tirmidhi that Rasulullah ﷺ said:

> *"See from whom you take your deen and the correct transmission chain is part of the deen".*

In other words, as regards him from whom you learn your deen first enquire from well known scholars about his credibility. The jug from which you drink water should first be inspected to see that the water inside it is clean and not contaminated.

THE STORY OF THE FALCON AND THE OWLS

Once a King's falcon flew away from his palace and landed in some ruins, where many owls were staying. As soon as they saw him arriving in their midst, the owls raised a loud voice of protest and objections against his arrival, saying: *"This falcon wants to take over our ruins for himself".*

The falcon hearing this accusation was bewildered and perplexed and said to them:

"I shall not tarry here among you
But shall return to the King.
You may keep your ruins to yourself
My place is with the King and near the crown"

The owls replied:

"This falcon is busy with a deceitful plan. He wants to oust us from these ruins and claim it for himself.

And he wants to take possession of our homes
And with his flattering and clever plans, intends to destroy our nests"

The falcon got the impression that the owls were going to attack him and thus warned them:

"If through your mischief one of my wings should break
That King to whom I am a cherished one, will attack and destroy
Your whole neighbourhood.
That King's bounty and kindness protects me
And wherever I go, his protective glance is over me.
I am in the thoughts of the King at all times,
And without me in his thoughts, his heart becomes ill.
I am a Royal falcon and for that all envy me.
How can stupid owls understand my position?"

LESSON:

There are times when the Awliyaa- the saints of Allah who are like the royal falcons and the beloved of Allah, are looked at by the stupid, worldly ones, in the same manner as the owls looked at the falcon, through wrong reasoning and analogy. Similarly, we find those who trouble them as a result of their wrong reasoning and conceptions. Allah however protects them. They are never for one moment out of the sight of the Master, no matter where they go.

As Allah says to the Rasool ﷺ:
"For verily you are within our sight".

In other words: *"O Muhammad ﷺ, these non-believers cannot destroy you for you are at all times in our sight and under our protection".*

THE STORY OF TAU-OOS AND THE HAKEEM

Once a peacock was busy pulling out its beautiful feathers and throwing them away. A Hakeem happened to pass that way.

He saw this and asked: *"O Peacock, why are you pulling out such beautiful feathers? What ingratitude is this?"*

The peacock replied:

"Don't you see that numerous calamities come to me
From all sides, due to these wings and feathers.
Unjust hunters place traps in all places
Just in order to get hold of these feathers and wings.
When by day I am unable to keep myself
Safe and protected against those calamities and trials,
It is better that I remove those feathers from me
And make my appearance unsightly
So as to make myself without worries in the mountains and meadows.
It is my opinion that it is more important for me to save my life than my outer form
For if the life is safe, what harm is there if the form is unseemly?"

LESSON:

This is the reason why the saintly ones keep themselves away from fame and pomp as Moulana explains in another couplet:

"Keep yourself unknown and without name or fame and be like an indigent one
So that this condition should keep you far removed from fame
For fame takes away all bounds of comfort and brings many calamities in its wake".

However, when Allah himself makes a saintly one famous, then His protection is like a shade over him. The bad form of fame is that form, where a person himself works for it and tries purposely to acquire it.

Haji Imdadullah (R.A.) used to say:

"I am sitting here without name and without any sign.
Who is it that has spread my fame about?"

In annihilating oneself and leading simple lives, our elders found peace and comfort.

I have heard of a story from my Sheikh Hazrat Phulpoori (R.A.), that Moulana Qasim Nanotwi (R.A.), the founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband was going somewhere dressed in a lungi and a very simple *'kurta'* (shirt). A man who saw him dressed so simply considered him a yarn spinner. He asked him: *"What is the price of cotton thread in the market today?"* Moulana replied: *"I did not go to the market today"*. He did not say: *"Do you consider me a yarn spinner?"* because that would have seemed as if there is some insulting reference to the spinners. After all, with Allah the criterion for honour and respect lies only in the *"taqwa"* that a person has.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT ANAS BIN MAALIK رضی اللہ عنہ

Once some guests came to visit Hazrat Anas Bin Maalik رضی اللہ عنہ. He entertained them with a meal. The tablecloth became dirty and discoloured, due to some curry having fallen upon it. Hazrat Anas رضی اللہ عنہ instructed the maid servant to cast it into the burning furnace. The servant did as she was commanded.

The guests were astonished at this command. When the tablecloth was thrown into the burning furnace, they awaited the appearance of smoke to indicate that the tablecloth was burning. But instead when the tablecloth was removed from the fire, it was still intact and had become clean.

They asked him:

"O Companion of Rasool ﷺ, why did this tablecloth not burn in the fire?

And instead of burning, had become perfectly clean'

Hazrat Anas رضی اللہ عنہ replied: *"The reason for the tablecloth not burning is this that on various occasions Rasulullah ﷺ cleansed his hands and lips with the cloth"*.

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"O You, who have become frightened of the fire and punishment of Jahannam
It is most advisable that you draw near to such blessed hands and lips, by following the Sunnat.
When something material has been granted such honour by the lips of Rasulullah ﷺ
You can imagine what honour he must have granted to his true Lovers".

LESSON:

When a tablecloth was granted this honour by the wiping of his blessed hands one can just imagine what honour and nearness to Allah will be granted in both the worlds to those who follow the Sunnat diligently, which is a way of obtaining Divine proximity. May Allah grant us all the ability to follow the Sunnat and make us anxious to attain that great bounty from Him, Ameen!

THE STORY OF A THIEF AT THE TIME OF HAZRAT UMAR رضي الله عنه

Once during the rule of Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه, a certain thief was caught, found guilty and handed over for punishment.

He complained bitterly and pleaded:

"O Ameerul Mumineen, this is my first crime.
Please pardon my fault".

Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه replied:

"Allah forbid! Allah does not send down His Revenge and punishment at the commission of crime for the first crime.
At most times by way of expressing His bounty
He covers up the faults of servants, but when they continue sinning

Then by way of justice, He seizes them and causes them disgrace.
So that both Allah's attributes become exhibited
As Giver of Good news and as Warner of His punishment"

LESSON:

In this story there is a great lesson for those intending to follow the path of the Sulook. There are those involved with looking at evil and similar sins for a long time and neglect to rectify and change their condition, yet they are noted to be Sufis or pious ones among men. For them to be at ease and be satisfied that Allah has concealed their sins and target Allah's attribute of vengeance and dishing out punishment for sins, is a very foolish attitude.

Allah's exhibition of this graceful nature, grants us the opportunity of rectification and sincere repentance. If we are not taking benefit from this opportunity, then His attribute of Justice will cause us to become seized by calamities and disgrace.

Hence at all times we should remain fearful of Allah exhibiting the other attribute. We should thus remain busy with seeking forgiveness and crying lamentfully before Him, endeavouring to leave aside all sinful activities. At the same time we should also continue to consult our spiritual guide to whom we entrust our rectification. When one continues to commit sins, the performing of much Zikr and the recitation of *'Wazeefas'* will not be of full benefit. The novice treading that Sufi path in such a way will always be incomplete in his endeavours and remain far from his objective of reaching nearness to Allah. This is so because continuing on the path of sin on the one side and attaining Allah's nearness are two opposite and contrasting concepts. The main pre-condition for sainthood is *'taqwa'* - fear of Allah and to be careful of one's duties to Him and His creation. The main pre-condition for sainthood is not the performing of Zikr profusely and the recitation of Wazeefas. However, it must be stressed that the recitation of Zikr etc. provide great help for the attaining of *'taqwa'*.

May Allah grant us all the ability to acquire within ourselves taqwa (fear for Him) and the ability to avoid all sins and also the ability to treat our sickness of sins. And May He grant us the opportunity to turn to some saint of His with the intention of acquiring all these things, Ameen!

THE STORY OF HAZRAT MOOSA (A.S.) VISITING THE SICK

Once Allah sent revelation to Nabi Moosa (A.S.): *"O Moosa (A.S.), you did not come to visit me during my illness"*.

Hazrat Moosa (A.S.) replied: *"Ya Allah, You are free of all shortcomings and free of illness. Glory be to You! What is the inner meaning of this statement of Thine? Please explain"*.

From the unseen a voice was heard:

"O Moosa (A.S.), A certain devotee of Mine who is also My chosen one, has fallen ill.
Go and look at him with a caring eye.
The illness of him who is close to me, is like my sickness
And that man's helplessness is like My helplessness.
Your visiting him in his sickness is for your own benefit
And its benefit, reward, nearness and the fruits of his duahs
Will all return to you, on returning from him.
Even if the sick one be an enemy, visiting him is better,
For through benevolence, very often an enemy also becomes a friend.
And even if he does not become a friend, at least there will be a lessening of enmity and malice,
Because doing good to some is an ointment against the wound of malice.
Apart from these there are many other benefits of benevolence.
But I fear extending this topic, O My righteous friend".

LESSONS:

1. We see here how great Allah's contact is with his special servants. He considers their sickness as His own sickness. This shows their state of belovedness to Him.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) referred to this relationship in another place, where he says:

> *"Whosoever desires to be a companion of Allah should sit in the gatherings of the saintly ones,*
> *And should consider his love and service to them to be love and service to Allah".*

2. The second advise is that even if an enemy is sick he should be visited. The visit will make him a friend.
3. If he is not going to become a friend, then at least his enmity will decrease.

NOTE:

However, where for Allah's sake cutting off of relations with someone is required, then such a person, should not be visited before a clear announcement of repentance has been made. Until such time one should remain far away from him. This mas-ala should be discussed with a pious, God-fearing *'Alim'*.

THE STORY OF THE TREE OF LIFE

A wise man once told a person, just to test him that in India there is such a tree, that whoever eats of the fruits of that tree, never dies. When the King heard of this, he fell in love with it. He immediately sent a messenger to India to search for this tree. The messenger wandered around in India from place to place in search of this tree. He wandered about in quite a distressed state, but nowhere did he find such a tree. Whenever he enquired from people, they would tell him: *"Only mad people look for such a tree"*. They used to jeer and scoff at him. At last when he had become tired of roaming around like that in a foreign country and exhausted by the difficulties of travel, he decided to return home. He was very disappointed. On his return he met a *"Qutub Sheikh"* along the way.

He said to the Sheikh:

"O Sheikh, this is a time for mercy and benevolence.
I have become helpless and disappointed in my quest.
This is a time for your kindness".

The Sheikh replied:

"What is your disappointment
And what is the nature of your quest?"

He replied:

"My King has given me this job to search for such a tree in India
That whosoever eats of its fruits will live forever.
I have wandered around in India for years and searched everywhere
But no sign of it did I find. People jeer at me and consider me a mad one".

The Sheikh listened to him, laughed and said:

"O Saleem, this tree is only the bounty of knowledge.
Through knowledge a person finds everlasting life
And one without knowledge is a dead one.
You have searched for the outer form of knowledge and therefore lost the way.
You have been deprived of the form of knowledge too, because you failed to understand the inner meaning".

LESSON:

The wise man who originally told the story about the tree in India actually compared knowledge to a tree. His aim was to test the listener. Knowledge is an abstract concept and such abstract concepts do not stand by themselves alone. For their existence they require an agent or a place on which to exist. Thus knowledge can only be acquired from the Ulama. The Ulama are the tree.

By knowledge is meant only that knowledge which causes one to reach Allah. The knowledge which is to a means of livelihood and leads to employment in industry and trade, is called industrial knowledge and trade knowledge. True knowledge is only knowledge of deen, through which a person tries to please his Master and thereby acquire a life of honour in both the worlds. Without this knowledge a person is a corpse, even if he is alive. For this reason, the wise man compared knowledge to the water of life. Without this knowledge, recognition of Allah (Ma'rifat) is impossible.

May Allah grant us true knowledge and grant us the ability to practise according to that knowledge, Ameen.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT IZRAEEL (A.S.) STARING AT A PERSON

A simple man once came to Hazrat Sulayman (A.S.) His face was pale and he was quite struck by fear and anxiety. Hazrat Sulayman (A.S.) asked him: *"Why are you so struck with fear?"*

He replied: *"Hazrat Izraeel (A.S.) stared at me with very angry eyes. For this reason, I am quite worried and distressed"*.

Then Hazrat Sulayman (A.S.) asked: *"What do you want?"*

He replied: *"Send me from here to India"*.

Hazrat Sulayman (A.S.) commanded the wind to transport him to any place in India where he wanted to go.

The following day Hazrat Sulayman (A.S.) met Hazrat Izraeel (A.S.) and at this meeting asked him: *"Why did you stare at a certain Muslim in such a manner that he became very distressed and worried? Was it your intention to take his soul away in a land where he has no heirs?"*

Hazrat Izraeel (A.S.) replied: *"I stared at him in astonishment because I had received the command to take hold of his soul in India.*

Allah ordered me to take his soul this day in India.
But when I saw him here I was astonished and confused.
When through the order of Allah I reached India, I found him there
And there I took hold of his soul.
O You listener, compare all the world's affairs in the light of this
And open your eyes to witness it.
Who are we fleeing from? From Allah? This is impossible.
Against who are we rebelling? Against Allah? This is pure disaster, disaster, disaster."

From this story we learn the lesson that at all times we should keep our affairs with Allah clear and safe. We should try our utmost to fulfil our duties to Allah and the rights of mankind, because we do not know when and where we shall have to say farewell to the life of this world, and appear before Allah for the reckoning.

It does not befit man to remain negligent in this world.
He shall have to remember death at all times.
To every man who ever comes to this world.
Destiny says: "I am following you, do remember".

THE STORY OF THE PLAN OF THE THIRSTY ONE

A very thirsty person was sitting on the bank of a river but a high wall prevented him reaching the water. Being very thirsty, very impatient and restless to get to the water, he climbed the wall. He then removed one-by-one brick out of the wall and threw it into the water. The splashing sound the brick made as it hit the water pleased him very much and consoled him. So he continued breaking one-by-one brick from the wall and throwing it into the water.

The water questioned him: *"Why do you strike me with the bricks? What benefit is there in it for you?"*

The man replied: *"There are two benefits for me".*

"The first benefit is that the splashing sound of the water
To the ear of a thirsty one, is sweet music.
Secondly, as the bricks are lessened the wall is lowered
And the water is becoming nearer,
The removal of the wall will become a means of reaching the water"

LESSON:

It is reported that Nabi Moosa (A.S.) asked Allah: *"What is the way of reaching unto You?"*

The reply from Allah's was: *"Discard your "nafs" (self) and come to me"*.

In the above story there is a lesson for the seekers of Allah. They are thirsty for Allah while the wall of the nafs (self) is preventing that meeting. Beyond this high wall of nafs lies the great ocean of nearness to Allah. Hence the one who will start annihilating his 'self' i.e. he who will discard every desire that is contrary to Allah's wishes - those desires which are like the bricks in that wall. He who will, for the sake of attaining Allah's pleasure, destroy those evil desires, for him there will be two great benefits.

Firstly, he will feel the closeness of the ocean of Allah's love and perceive it as being within reach.

Secondly, that as the preventative wall of his desires become lower, the seeker after Allah will come nearer to his objective, until perfect nearness will be attained, the day he annihilates his *'self'* completely.

Annihilation means to make all your desires subject to the pleasure of Allah. The day this rank is reached through spiritual exercises and through a saintly spiritual guide, one will have attained the good life. A glimpse of it can be had from Khwaja Majzoob's word:

"It is as if I am living in paradise by night and day
My garden is in my heart in full blossom.

At every moment it is as if there is a flood of light upon my heart
And at all times the thought of my beloved reigns.
At no moment does the remembrance of the Beloved leave me.
My 'self' is drunk with the melody of Him: 'I am Near".
This Majzoob whom all consider to be of wretched state
What do they know of the pleasure state I am in, this fortunate one?
Now another condition has taken hold over me day and night,
At all times I am in a state of blessed communion with Him.
Now in my heart there is continuously a remembrance of Him night and day,
Even in separation I am in communication with Him".

THE STORY OF PROMISING TO DO SOMETHING TOMORROW

A certain man planted a thorn-tree in the path where people walked. As it grew bigger and stronger, the thorns started injuring those walking past.

The people started blaming the planter but it had no effect on him, except that he promised every time that the following day he was going to remove the tree from the path. However, nothing was done about the tree. At last the matter reached the governor of that place. The governor too ordered him to uproot the tree. The planter promised the governor that he would do so the following day, but again he failed to carry out his promise. The result was that the tree grew until it became very strong and sturdy, with its roots going very deep in the ground. Now he was unable to uproot the thorn-tree at all.

"The bad tree grew into a strong young tree
While the planter became old and weak.
The thorny tree was everyday becoming healthier
And the uprooter was becoming daily weaker.
O Listener, very often you have become grief-stricken over your

evil deeds
And very often your evil deeds brought you regret and the desire to repent.
So often you have become helpless at the hands of your evil deeds and devastated,
Have you become senseless? You have become senseless to an overwhelming degree.
O you senseless one, arise and rectify your old previous bad habits
Rise, take up an axe and attack like a man
Like Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه *who uprooted the gate of Khaybar".*

LESSON:

In this story Moulana gives the advise that a seeker of truth and seeker after Allah should never put off for tomorrow the rectification of evil deeds and habits. Never should they say: *"I will rectify and change my habits tomorrow"* and when tomorrow comes along, then again say the same. In this way, Shaytaan causes that promise of tomorrow to continue, until the time of death arrives. Then the intender will enter the grave without rectification and disappointed. Shaytaan will rejoice.

Just as the thorny tree which was planted could in the end not be uprooted by the planter, in the same way, the longer a person takes to discard or rectify bad habits, those bad habits will become stronger at the roots. As the days and nights pass by you will become older and weaker which will make the discarding and rectification of evil habits very difficult.

For this reason, rise up without any delay and procrastination. Grab an axe of courage and uproot the door of evils, just like Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه uprooted the gate of Khaybar and threw it away. And just as Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه was granted great help being in the company of Rasulullah ﷺ, you also should join forces with the saints of Allah, the friends of Rasulullah ﷺ. Through their company, acquire the help and bounty of Allah.

Hazrat Moulana Thanwy (R.A.) says: *"Even these days no position of Wilayat (sainthood) is open and unoccupied; whether it is the rank of Qutub, Ghowth or Abdaal. All these ranks even today are filled"*.

These saints, who in your sight are looked upon as being of wretched condition and are considered worthless, after a hundred years of history they will be looked upon as the Junaid, Rumi (R.A.), Attaar and Shibly of this age. It is foolish to argue like this: *"Where do you find saintly men today like those in the past?"*

This is a Shaytaani deception which wishes to keep us deprived of the blessings of these men. Do we find anyone complaining today that for physical ailments: *"Where do we find a Jalinoos or a Socrates or a Plato? No, we go to the present day doctors for treatment."*

Similarly, in the event of spiritual or internal illnesses and for their rectification, we should contact the present day followers of the Sunnah who have been granted permission by the elders to initiate others into an oath of allegiance (Bay'at). We should consult them and start our self-rectification. Neither should we delay rectification until the oath of *'Bay'at'* because Bay'at is Sunnat Ghayr Muakkada, while the idea of rectification of the self is an obligatory duty.

However, after starting the process of rectification, if one finds himself agreeable to it, he should also enter into *'Bay'at'* considering it a Sunnah because through *'Bay'at'* a special connection is formed which increases the benefit.

THE STORY OF A MOUSE LEADING A CAMEL BY THE REINS

Once a mouse took hold of the reins of a camel and tried to run away with him. The camel seeing the foolishness of the mouse became submissive and relaxed. Wherever the mouse led him, the camel followed meekly, like a slave obedient to his master. They went along until they came to a river where the mouse lost its presence of mind and came to a standstill. He started thinking that up to that moment he had led an animal of great size and up to now had enjoyed the honour of having made the camel submissive to him. But now that they have come to the river, how can he lead him through that? While thinking he came to a standstill.

"The mouse remained standing there and became dried up."

The camel asked him:

"O My Companion over mountains and forests.

Why this hesitation and why this perplexity?

Take courage and step into the river".

The mouse answered: *"I am afraid of becoming drowned".*

The camel replied: *"Let me see how deep the water is and whether you will drown or not".*

He placed one leg into the water and then said: *"O Mouse, My Sheikh, My Guide. The water is only up to my knee. So proceed leading me through".*

The mouse replied: *"The water only reaches up to your knee. That is so many times over my head. There is a big difference between your leg and mine".*

The camel said: *"Please do not become rude and insulting. Come straight into the water and guide me along. Up to now you used to be very proud of having led me and you acquired great honour through that. O you foolish one, I allowed myself to be led along by you, so that your foolishness may become so increased and manifest."*

The mouse replied: *"For me to enter the water will be my destruction. I am repenting. Please pardon me. After this I shall not even think about becoming your leader and your Sheikh".*

He said:

"For Allah's sake have I repented of my sins
Kindly save me from the dangerous waters".

The camel, on hearing of the repentance of the mouse, felt sorry for him and said:

"All right. Come and sit upon the hump of my back. Another hundred mice like yourself can sit upon my back and with safety cross over the water.
Remain a subject if Allah did not make you a ruler.
And do not sail in a boat if you did not learn sailing.
And grant your copper to the men of chemistry
So that they, through your company with them, can change you to gold".

(In other words through keeping the company of the righteous saints of Allah you will derive benefit from them, bringing about changes for the better).

"If you are like a stone, senseless, deprived of the fear of the hereafter,
Seek the company of a saint and become changed into a pearl.
And refrain from criticising the saints and from accusing the Shah of theft,
For what need has the Shah of stealing?"

LESSON:

The saints of Allah carry a precious treasure within themselves. In their sight the whole world is insignificant and worthless, because their hearts have become joined to the Creator of this world. Hence, do not underestimate them and do not compare your nights and days with theirs. Do not become deceived by your worldly dignity and honour like that mouse was deceived. If ever you should consider yourself superior to the saintly ones then, you will become humiliated and deprived of good. In the end you, like the mouse, you too will have to sit upon their backs, with the purpose of crossing over to safety, and like the mouse you too will have to repent.

Hence, from the first day remove from your mind the love of splendour of this world, worldly honour, worldly wealth, esoteric knowledge and soulless actions. Remove these loves from your mind and form sincere contact with some saint of Allah. Within a few days you will come to know and you will swear what abundance of benefit it has brought to you. (Use worldly wealth. Do not love it more than Allah and his Rasool ﷺ).

As Hazrat Khawaja Majzoob (R.A.) said in respect of his Sheikh:

"You effaced the effects of the idols and you enabled me to witness the grandeur of Allah
You transformed my eyes into such eyes that can see the reality and turned my heart into one that can perceive the greatness of the Creator
My heart was engulfed in negligence, when suddenly you acquainted it with Allah Ta-ala,
Thus you made me unconcerned with all besides Him.
Practising on Deen seemed like a burden, while being engrossed in the world was easy,
You have now made the burden a pleasure and what seemed to be a pleasure (preoccupation with the world) has become a burden.
You have imbued me with courage and ushered this weakling into such ranks,
The ranks of those endowed with that great responsibility (of conveying Deen)
This heart of iron you have melted with a heart burning with The love of Allah Ta-ala,
You have made restless one who had never experienced this pain (Love of Allah)
O Majzoob you are leaving this home with a great fortune,
A million thanks that Allah Ta-ala sent me to your door"

THE STORY OF THE KILLING OF THE ELEPHANT CUB

In India a group of friends on a journey wandered far away from home. Along the way they experienced great difficulty and hunger, until they had become very much distressed and impatient with the pangs of hunger.

One intelligent person amongst the group advised them: *"Look, there in front of you are the cubs of an elephant. Do not hunt the cubs. The elephant has gone somewhere. If you should kill and eat his cub, he is surely not going to leave any one of you alive thereafter. Listen carefully to my advise".*

However, because of their great hunger they could not show any patience. They killed one of the cubs, roasted its meat and ate it up. The intelligent person said to them: *"Alas, if only you had rather eaten the grass of the forest! If only you had taken precautions against this! Now you will have to see the result of your actions".*

One man from among the group acted upon the advise of the intelligent man. He kept himself away from eating the meat. He ate grass instead and went to sleep a distance away from the rest of them. He was thinking, that remaining among the unjust ones, would make him one of them and the elephant would destroy him too, in revenge.

A short while later the elephant came along and saw the blood of his cub. He immediately understood what had happened. He was in extreme rage and anger. It appeared as if smoke and fire was coming out of his trunk. He came to where these people were lying asleep and saw one man sleeping alone some distance away. He smelled the mouth of this one first and walked around him three times, but he did not get the smell of the meat of his cub from his mouth. He considered him innocent of the crime and left him to go further to the others. From the mouth of the others he got the smell of the blood of his cub, so he trampled each and every one of them to pieces. He then threw the pieces into the air by way of revenge for his cub.

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Oh Ye People! You murder people and seize their belongings,
Remember Allah is well aware of your tyranny.
The odour of the mouth of an unjust one smells of injustice,
An elephant recognises the smell of his cub.
That respected one (i.e. Rasulullah ﷺ) who could smell the fragrance of Allah coming from Yemen,
Do you think that he could not smell out the evil doers of his time?"
The Prophet ﷺ said: "On the waves of the air I smell Allah's fragrance coming from the direction of Yemen."

This was a reference to Hazrat Owais Qarni's رضي الله عنه love for Allah and his sincerity and Imaan.

"The bad smell of arrogance, greed and lustful desires comes out of conversation.
Just like the bad smell exuding from the mouth of him who ate onions.
O you people! you commit sinful acts and then go to sleep
And the unpleasant smell thereof reaches up to the green heaven".

LESSON:

My Sheikh after relating this story used to say: *"It is not so dangerous to harm an elephant, as it is to harm his cubs. For the elephant might bear harm caused to it, but if harm or injury is caused to it's cub it will take revenge and not rest until the person is destroyed."*

Then with this as a basis, Hazrat used to say, that in the case of sins and disobedience against Allah, repentance will bring pardon, but for those who trouble and harm the saints of Allah, Allah takes revenge against them.

Thus Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said in a Hadith Qudsi where Allah is reported as saying:

"Whoever harasses or persecutes my friends (the saints) I declare war against them".

May Allah grant us all the proper respect and honour for the saints of Allah, Ameen.

THE VIRTUE OF REQUESTING DUAH FROM OTHERS

"If due to the misfortune of sins, you do not possess a tongue of acceptance
Go to the friends of Allah and request their duahs
Request those brothers of purity to pray on your behalf".

Once revelation came to Nabi Moosa (A.S.): *"O Moosa, call upon Me with such a tongue which has not committed any sin".*

Nabi Moosa (A.S.) replied: *"O Our Lord, None of us possess such a tongue".*

The reply came: *"Call upon Us with the tongue of others".*

(In other words, request others to make duah for you, because you did not sin through their mouths).

"When did you ever commit sins through another's tongue?
So with the tongue of others call me: "O Allah!"

NOTE:

Here Allah is giving a lesson to Nabi Moosa (A.S.)'s people through him. The Ummat (followers) are the sinful ones while the Prophet is sinless. So outwardly the command came to Nabi Moosa (A.S.) but in actual fact, the address is directed at his Ummat.

"Or cleanse your mouth and make your lazy, negligent soul alert and wide awake".

This address is also directed at Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) Ummat:

"The name of Allah is pure. When you will take His name, your mouth too will become clean. The impurity will pick up its bedding and depart.
Every opposite will run away from its opposite, as night flees when

the day breaks forth with its light
And so the purity of Allah's Name dispels your impurity.
When the name of Allah comes onto the tongue
The impurity and darkness of sin cannot remain there"

LESSON:

In this story there is a great lesson for the seekers of Allah Taala. No matter in what they may be and no matter how much involved in sin, they should not delay in making Zikrullah due to their impurities. Do not delay in making Zikrullah, awaiting first the fruits of rectification of the self. In fact rectification (islaah) will through the blessings of Zikrullah become easy. It is through the noor of Zikr that one becomes aware of the darkness of sins, due to the fact that things are easily recognised through their opposites.

Hence, it is proven by experience that when a Zaakir (one performing Zikr) commits a sin, he is quickly granted the grace to repent, because in the noor of Zikr, the darkness of sins and evil are quickly perceived. And after the fragrant perfume of Zikr, the evil smell of sin is strongly perceived, causing one to quickly make towbah and cleanse the heart. It is just like a person who is used to wearing clean clothes. Such a person will not tolerate a dirty spot on it and he will not rest until the dirty spot is washed away. One used to being dressed in dirty clothes, will not even see a new dirty spot on his clothes, because his clothes are full of dirty spots. And even if he does become aware of a dirty spot, there will be no urgency in the heart to cleanse that spot and remove it.

In view of the above, the saints first inculcate into their novices to start Zikr right from the beginning. And in this way slowly and gradually all other rectification becomes accomplished.

THE STORY THAT OUR SAYING 'YA ALLAH' IS HIS REPLY

A certain devotee was one night making the Zikr of Allah's name in complete sincerity so much so that from this Zikr his saliva too was tasting sweet. Shaytaan said to him: *"O Sufi, be silent. Why are you reciting this Zikr so profusely? It is of no benefit. After all, you do not get any reply from Allah's side. So what benefit is there in one sided love?"*

Hearing these words of deceit from Shaytaan, the Sufi became broken-hearted and depressed. He postponed the rest of his Zikr and went to sleep.

That night he saw in a dream that Hazrat Khidr (A.S.) came to him asking him: *"Why were you negligent of Zikr this night?"*

The Sufi replied: *"From Allah's side there was no reply of "Labbaik". From this I got the impression that my Zikr was not accepted by Him".*

Hazrat Khidr (A.S.) said: *"Allah has sent a message to you. He has said: Tell this servant of mine:*

"O My servant, Your saying: "Allah" is My reply of 'Labbaik' (I am present)"

(In other words, when your first *"Allah"* is accepted by Allah, then only you are granted the ability to say *"Allah"* a second time. Thus this second *"Allah"* is a Labbaik from My side)

And O My Bondsman, this offering of yours and this burning pain and love for Me
All these are My messages to you".
"O My bondsman, these efforts of yours out of love for Me, your Zikr and your spiritual struggles
Are from My side a reflection of attraction towards Me".

Someone else put it quite nicely:

"My search for you too is as a result of someone's kindness.
These feet do not lift up they are lifted up.

O My Bondsmen, Your fear and Your love of Me is a gift from My side
It is the attraction of My Grace and Mercy, and in your every 'Ya Rab, Ya Allah'
My Labbaik is included. "I am present".
The soul of an ignorant one is deprived of this Zikr and duah
And he is not blessed towards saying 'Ya Rab, Ya Rab!".

LESSON:

For those who are involved in making Zikr, there is in this story good news. Hence at the time of making Zikr, this should be borne in mind that it is when our first *"Allah"* is accepted then only the second Zikr of *"Allah"* follows. And this second Zikr must be accepted before the third one follows, while the uttering of the third *"Allah"* is a clear sign of the acceptance of the second one.

Blessed is this gift for the Zaakireen. May Allah grant us the ability to make Zikr up to the last breath of our lives, Ameen.

THE STORY OF MAJNOON LOVING THE DOGS FROM LAYLA'S STREET

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: *"Once Majnoon saw the dog of Layla's street going somewhere. He recognised it, started kissing its feet and exhibiting his love for it.* Some people saw this and said to him: *"O you mad one, what is this that you are doing? Why do you show love for such a dirty animal, full of impurities?"*

Majnoon replied:

"O you who possess a mere outer form and body; O You who are deprived of the true taste of love, acquire awareness of the condition of my heart and see it through my eyes.
This dog is the creation of my Lord
It is a guard over the street of Layla.

In my sight, the dust from the feet of the dog living in the street of Layla
Is better than huge lions.
The dog living in the street of Layla in my view is so precious,
That I am not prepared to exchange even one hair of its body for many lions.
Many a lion has become a slave to the dogs of Layla's street,
Since these secrets cannot be explained in words, I remain silent and bid you salaam.
O People, if you proceed beyond your worship of outer form and develop contact with the Creator, who is the fountain-head of all beauty,
Then in this world you will start enjoying the blessings of paradise and you will see a rose-garden everywhere".

LESSON:

In his love for Layla, Majnoon finds the dogs of Layla's street worthy of love. How is it that the Lovers of Allah go to Makkah Shareef and Madina Shareef but have no love for the inhabitants of these cities? When they return from Haj you hear their complaints against the inhabitants of these cities. They relate all the problems they experienced over there. Regarding such people, one has the fear that their Haj was not accepted (maqbool).

In Madina Shareef, a certain man once bought some sour milk (dahi). He said: *"This 'dahi' is too sour. The 'dahi' in India is better than this"*. That night he saw Rasulullah ﷺ in a dream. The Rasul ﷺ said to him: *"O you disrespectful one, O you who are deprived of love, leave this city. You are not fit to live here"*

May Allah save us all from showing disrespect and keep us safe from harm.

In a Hadith we are told: *"O people, love the Arabs"*. It is a great pity that these days we show no regard for this injunction. My friends, if we intend to give them a word of advise or something which is in their interest and welfare, it is well and good, but it is something different if we in our gatherings continuously back-bite and slander them. We should consider it our good fortune to be able to pray for their success and welfare, with prayers from our hearts.

Similarly, this story teaches us to fulfil the rights of the Ulama, the saintly ones and especially him who is our spiritual guide. Also the rights which their family members and children have on us and the correct manners we should have towards them. It also teaches us the proper respect and honour we should show towards the Imams and the muezzins of mosques, because these persons are the keepers and custodians of the Lord's Houses. For this reason, we should love them and consider service to them as a means towards acquiring the pleasure of Allah.

Just imagine, we fear troubling and harassing the dog of the District Commissioner. In fact this fear, is fear of the Commissioner himself. Similarly, whoever has any kind of general or special contact with Him should in a similar manner be honoured according to their degree of connection with Him.

However, these things are not understood by those people who are deprived of proper understanding, as Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

> *"O Allah, we seek from you the ability to show correct Adaab*
> *(manners)*
> *Because the one devoid of Adaab is he who is deprived of Your Grace.*
> *O Allah, grant us the ability to show correct Adaab, Ameen."*

THE STORY OF LAYLA AND THE CALIPH OF BAGHDAD

Once the Caliph of Baghdad told Layla:

"You are so very dark and ugly
But yet Majnoon is so madly in love with you.

You have no special beauty beyond other beautiful women
So why is this Majnoon so mad about you?"

Lalyla replied:

"O Caliph, if you also possessed the eyes of Majnoon,
You too would have become oblivious to both worlds.
O Caliph, you are involved with your self-centredness
His love for me has made him (Majnoon) unconscious of himself
And this unconsciousness in the path of love is beneficial
While consciousness is harmful".

(In other words, it is a sign of true love when a person is only aware and conscious of the existence of a beloved, while being unconscious and unaware of anyone else).

LESSON:

In this story the following advises are found:

1) Hajee Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (R.A.), used to say:
"O Lord, Make me unaware of all others
And let me remain conscious only of Your existence".

This does not mean that he prays to become negligent and unmindful of relatives, wife, children and other loved ones. But what he means is that let my care over them also be for Allah's sake, not just being good to them by way of recompense, or expecting something in return. In this way contact with Allah's creation through the sincerity of intention becomes contact with Creator.

2) The second point of advise is this that one should, through the company of the saintly ones, endeavour to acquire a sight of respect for the Sahabah, the Walis of Allah, the Kaaba, Madina Shareef, the Hajar-e-Aswad, Safa, Marwa, Mina, Arafaat, Muzdalifah, all the mosques of the world, and the servants of these mosques

We should through the saintly ones and their company acquire that attitude of glance and honour, because without the company of those saintly ones, this sort of glance and attitude is not generally acquired. There is a big difference between the sight of the eyes and the insight of the heart. The sight of the eyes is subject to the heart's perception. If the heart's perception is correct, the sight of the eyes will also be correct. If the heart is ill due to Kufr and iniquity and the spiritual darkness that is created through that, then the eyes too will not function properly. In such a case it will of necessity follow that due to wrong inner perception one will become involved with the wrong sight.

Here is an example in this world: A person who is a seeker of Allah Taala, will consider it an honour for himself and his good fortune to pick up the shoes of the saintly ones and carry them for him. On the other hand there is the person who is a seeker after worldly goods, who turns away from Allah. He will consider it an honour and a pleasure to flatter the worldly ones, serve them and do his utmost to please them. Therefore you will notice that their inner perception of the hearts are different, their attitudes are in contrast to each other.

In similar fashion, we may look at the era of the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم. On the one hand we have Abu Hurayra رضي الله عنه with his correct insight and perception. He said: *"The face of Rasulullah ﷺ shone so brightly that it seemed as if his face was the (bright) morning sun"*.

On the other hand we have Abu Jahl and his wrong insight and wrong perception, which made him practically blind to the truth. In fact, he only saw his own ugliness in the shining mirror of Nabi ﷺ's face.

The anecdote of a dark ugly looking Abyssinian is quite well-known. He was on a journey somewhere and along the route he saw a mirror lying on the ground. He picked it up and looking into the mirror, he saw his own reflection. He said: *"If you had not been so ugly and dark with such thick lips, then why would someone have thrown you here, in this jungle, with such unconcern"*.

This man did not realise that he was looking at his own reflection.

3. The third point is this that the ordinary man looks at the Saints of Allah with his imperfect empty life and sight and thinks that they too are empty and deprived of all good and happiness.

Once a spiritually bankrupt person told Hajee Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (R.A.): *"I am surprised that Moulana Mohamed Qaasim Nanotwi (R.A.) the founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband and Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) became Mureeds of yours".*

Hajee Imdadullah replied: *"Yes brother, I am also surprised that these persons chose someone like myself, to become Mureeds"*

Since Hajee Imdadullah Saheb (R.A.) had completely annihilated his nafs, he did not show any displeasure at this criticism. May Allah make us all His sincere lovers, Ameen.

Khwaja Majzoob (R.A.) says:

"I found some complaining day and night
I found some in worries day and night
I did not find anyone happy under the skies,
Only Majzoob I found happy in this place of sorrow.
If they desire protection (Oh! Allah) from grief and sorrow
They should become Your mad lovers."

THE STORY OF MAJNOON WRITING LAYLA'S NAME ON THE SAND

Once Majnoon was sitting on the bank of a river repeatedly writing the name of Layla on the sand. A passer by saw him and asked:

"O Majnoon, what are you busy doing?
To whom are you writing this letter?"

Majnoon replied:

"When parting from my Layla distresses me, I write her name
repeatedly
And in this way give consolation to a heart grieved by separation."

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) gives advise:

"O people, this is the effect of sensual love.
Can the true love for the Master be any less than that?"

LESSON:

In this story there is an answer to those without inner sight who criticise those who continuously and repeatedly recite the name of Allah. They ask: *"Why do these devotees make so much Zikr and project so much love for Allah. Why do they continue pouring out before Him their complaints, sighs and lamentations? We have also studied so many books. We also possess libraries. We also give lectures and talks. Why is it that we do not acquire the same state as them?"*

Then after these questions, they explain their own deprivation by saying: *"These devotees do their Zikr, spiritual vigils, their sighs and crying before Allah, to be seen by men, to attract people towards them and to gain worldly benefit."* If only these unjust ones could observe these saintly ones in the privacy of their inner rooms, engaged in praying and Zikr. Who is there to witness their prostrations. For whom are these prostration's made in privacy, for whom do they wet their places of prostration with their tears? Who is there to see them sending their sighs and Ah's up to Allah, before whom they complain of all their pains and distresses?

"Majzoob has cried over all the calamities of this world,
Now to grant him blessings and acceptance is left to you, Oh! Allah".

These are the saints of Allah whose Ah's, their Salaams and their messages continuously reach up to the Throne of Allah and who have a strong connection with Him. They remain silent here on earth but still their hearts declare their love for Him.

"The saintly ones are silent

But their repetition of their cries reach the Beloved
And reach up to His Throne.
To whom are they showing their blessed solitude,
So that they reap material benefit?
In fact their "Ah's" are hidden from the whole universe."

Now from this story we turn to something else. If Layla, who was a mere corpse, producing stinking urine and faeces could make someone fall madly in love, then what about that Being who creates thousands of Laylas and then destroys them, and who is the fountain head of all beautiful forms and the centre of all beauty? Can that Being with its perfect beauty and love not make one mad in love with Him. He is that Holy and Perfect Being. His mad ones are also holy. The Prophets and Saints are His mad lovers who will continue to be His successful and honoured ones in both worlds. Allah grants this bountiful present to His lovers.

In contrast to that, what does Layla's Majnoon get? Majnoon gets worldly love which is something figurative - not true love. Figurative means something which is not the true thing. As such, he who is involved with figurative love will always be in deception. The beauty, for which he is prepared to die, departs when the object of that beauty dies. On the other hand the one who is involved with Divine Love, his object of Love is the Being of Allah, which is Everlasting and never perishes. For this reason, his love remains forever and when the lover passes away he carries with him the pleasure of the hope of meeting his true Love.

"When either the lover or the beloved dies
Or through old age there is a lessening of beauty,
Figurative love fades.
While true love remains as strong as ever".

After death from the life of *"Barzakh"* (the grave) till the gathering place of Qiyamat and right up to paradise, the Lovers of Allah will continue to have His name on their lips repeatedly.

From the story of Layla and Majnoon one should not have the doubts about the permissibility of *'illicit'* love which is completely haraam. Illicit sensual love is the opposite of true love and the meeting of two opposite entities is impossible.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) narrates the story of Layla and Majnoon to give the lesson of love for Allah. This is like teaching small children how to read Urdu by starting to teach the letters of the Alphabet: *'Laam'* is for *'Laddu'* (a sweetmeat). Everyone knows the aim is not to draw attention to Laddu. It is only used to teach the letter Laam.

Similar is the case in teaching the *'Alif'*. If one says *'Alif'* is for Ullu (Owl). The aim is not to draw attention to the owl but by taking into consideration the temperament of children, this is a means of teaching them to remember the alphabets.

"The whole creation are children except the lovers of Allah and the darling servants of Allah,

And for as long as one does not attain freedom from the jungle of desires of the self, that body will remain immature".

In other words even if the body becomes a hundred years old it will remain immature as long as it is not freed from the desires of the flesh. Readers would have understood clearly that Moulana's aim in telling the story of Layla and Majnoon is taking into consideration our childlike nature, so that through this we should learn the love of Allah. If Majnoon had to dig up the grave of Layla and see her rotten and smelling corpse, he would have considered his own life as having been wasted and would surely have repented of his love. Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) said that the deeds Majnoon committed after becoming mad will not be taken into account on the day of reckoning and there will no punishment. But he could be called to account for those actions which led him to become mad, which could have been avoided i.e. *"Why did he give his life for worldly love?"*

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) says: *"Figurative, sensual, illicit love is a form of Allah's punishment."* May Allah protect us all from it. Once Moulana's nephew Moulana Shabbir Ali sent a handsome young beardless student to him on an errand. Moulana was at that time busy writing in an upstairs room in solitude. The young student came into Moulana's room. As soon as Moulana saw him, he got out of the room and came down to the ground floor. He did not find it suitable to stay with the young boy in the privacy of the room for one minute.

He said to Moulana Shabbir Ali: *"Don't ever send a beardless young boy to me in private"*. Moulana Thanwy (R.A.) wanted to teach his mureeds a lesson of Taqwa.

In the path of Allah privacy with a strange woman and with a handsome beardless boy is as dangerous as deadly poison. Those who desire to follow the path of tassawuf and those who are seekers after Allah, should avoid these things just as they would avoid a poisonous snake.

"If you are going to go after passing beauty,
This is a spotted snake which will bite you".

From no other sins will the Saalik be more harmed, than from casting evil glances and from illicit love. Very strong darkness is caused by figurative love. In fact a person's direction of Qiblah becomes changed through it. If we take the heart to be a compass and take the needle to point towards Allah, at ninety degrees west, other sins will cause the needle to move away two or four degrees towards the south or north. By making towbah it will quickly move back to ninety degrees. But when the heart becomes involved with Haraam love for women or young boys and this love settles in the heart, the needle of the compass moves to one hundred and eighty degrees to the east and the heart moves very far away from Allah.

May Allah protect Akhtar and his physical as well as spiritual children as well as all Muslims of this world from Haraam love and its punishment. Ameen. O Lord of the Universe, through Your Mercy and through Your Nabi ﷺ, the Nabi ﷺ of Mercy.

If it should happen that a person becomes plagued with bad desires and involved in illicit love, one should speedily take refuge with one of the Saints of Allah. These Walis have the perfect and effective treatment for this disease. Thousands of Allah's bondsmen have been healed of it. Their prescriptions are most effective against this great poisonous disease. Just as arsenic is deadly, similarly to act upon the demands of the self is also deadly poison for our spiritual and physical self. To remove these poisons from the path of truth is beneficial indeed.

THE STORY OF HAZRAT MOOSA (A.S.) AND TOWHEED

Revelation once came to Nabi Moosa (A.S.) wherein Allah said to him:

"O Moosa, I have made you My Chosen One".

Hazrat Moosa (A.S.) replied: *"O Lord, what is the special quality through which you make Your Chosen Ones, so that I may increase in it and rise in Your esteem?"*

Allah replied:

"I love My bondsmen very much
When they behave towards Me like infants,
Who in spite of their mother's punishment and anger,
Still attach themselves to her, instead of fleeing.
When that mother gives him a slap, he still flees to her
And while crying, holds onto her strongly".

I have seen on many occasions how a mother beat her three or four year old child, telling him to get out of the house, but the child, shouting and crying, held fast onto the mother's legs.

(O Allah, I beg of You through Your Mercy and Grace that you grant this Akhtar a strong relationship with You, even stronger than that between a mother and child and also grant this same favour to all the Muslims, Ameen).

"The small child does not want help from anyone save the mother
He even shows no inclination to his father
Instead only looks upon his mother
As the source and origin of all good and evil.
O Moosa (A.S.), your imagination and connection with Us in good and evil is similar to that,
That except for Us, your attention is not drawn to anyone else.
O Moosa (A.S.), in your view, anyone other than Us
Is ineffectual like a clod of earth or a stone.
Whether that one is an infant, a young man or an old man".

LESSON:

In this story Moulana Rumi (R.A.) has explained Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) conception of towheed and then gives the advise that we too should try to bring our contact with Him on the same level. We should also pray for and work out plans to bring it to that level, so that it becomes like the relationship a small child has with its mother and have the same dependence on Him, as a small child has on its mother. No matter in what condition Allah keeps us, whether in calamities or in comfort, in health or in sickness, whether in a stage of want or of plenty, whether He keeps us pleased or displeased, whether He brings about sweet conditions or bitter circumstances, whether He brings about conditions in accordance with our temperaments and to our liking or conditions against our temperaments and not of our liking - in all these cases and circumstances, we should turn to Him and not flee from Him. No matter what the conditions, we should still rub our foreheads against the frame of His door, and cry before Him, as we beg of Him to keep us safe from all evils, and beg of Him pardon for sins committed. Apart from Allah, we should look at no one else as our place of refuge and no matter what conditions He causes to be brought upon us, we should be satisfied therewith, saying: *"Alhamdu lillahi alaa kulli haal, - All praise be to Allah in every condition"*.

Should we become displeased and impatient at conditions that prevail over us, the calamity will most definitely not subside, but our Imaan can leave us. That means that together with the loss of the worldly things, our success in the hereafter can also be destroyed.

When there is a delay in the acceptance of your duahs, do not become distressed, but retain your hope. Consider despairing of Allah's mercy as being of Kufr. Nabi Yaqoob (A.S.) prayed earnestly for his missing son Hazrat Yusuf (A.S.). After forty years this duah was accepted and answered. Allah is the Ruler (Haakim) and at the same time He is also the Wise One (Hakeem). He knows what progress is made by a person spiritually in his Imaan and Ikhlaas through sorrows. And He knows what rank is acquired through patient perseverance, ranks which cannot be attained through spiritual strivings (Mujahada).

Remember the calamities which faced the Prophets, the Sahabah and the saints. That will supply you inner strength. Visit the gatherings of the saintly ones and inform them of your spiritual conditions and consult with them. Continue to admit before Allah your weakness and inability, seeking from Him your safety and welfare.

Think earnestly about His attribute of being the Most Merciful One, the Wise One. All these things will be easily understood from attending the gatherings of the saintly ones.

Another point worth bearing in mind is this that a minor calamity is a protection from a major calamity. One should therefore say: *"O Allah, thank you that you did not send a bigger calamity over me. O Allah, we are weak. Change this calamity through Your merciful Grace, to a bounty of safety"*.

A certain holy man set forth one morning from his home. As he came out his head struck the door frame and the blow was so heavy that he was forced to lie down. He uttered the words: *"Alhamdu lillahi alaa kulli haal - All praise be to Allah at every condition"*. Allah is the Wise One, All Knowing. In each and every of His actions for a servant there is good and wisdom, which is hidden. His servant objected to this utterance of his: *"I don't understand. And I cannot see what benefit there was for you in this blow (which struck your head)"*.

A short while later it became known that the direction in which the saintly one was proceeding from his house, a few enemies with sticks were waiting to attack him and murder him. When this became known, everyone understood.

May Allah grant us such righteous belief which will become a means towards becoming beloved in His sight and accepted by Him, Ameen.

THE STORY OF NABI SULAYMAN (A.S.) AND HIS INVITATION TO BILQEES

Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) sent a messenger to Bilqees inviting her to Islam:

"O Bilqees, arise and look at your actual homeland and proper contact with Allah
And on the banks of the river of truth seek the pearls of the pleasures of Allah.
O Bilqees, Your sisters who have already embraced Islam
Are through the blessing thereof residing in the enlightened heavens.
O Bilqees, what has come over you
That you are still in love with this dead world?
Allah has granted those sisters of yours
Such great favours and bounties. Do you know that?
O Bilqees, arise and come to see the inner wealth

And come and enjoy the fruits of our treasure.
O Bilqees, arise and come to the ocean of generosity
And enjoy the benefit even without means.
The means we possess is not ours
But the bounty and Grace of the Divine Being.
Your believing sisters are enjoying the pleasures of a life of faith.
And for how long will you continue to tolerate the sorrows of worldly distress?
O Bilqees, arise and become the companion of good fortune.
And become disconnected from the Kingdom of Saba which is a temporary abode.
In pleasure you resemble that Faqir who in spite of his poverty starts beating a drum
And says I am King of the unworthy ones.
Leave that aside and become inclined to the everlasting life of the hereafter.
O Bilqees, arise and of your own choice prefer to accept guidance
Before this worship of impurity and this dead world
And before death should come along and leave you no choice.
O Bilqees, come along and before death overtakes you accept Islam
And see the Kingdom of Allah's nearness and its everlasting nature.
O Bilqees, discard your misplaced pride and arrogance
For before Allah humility is acceptable and arrogance has no worth.
O Bilqees, arise and do not oppose fate, otherwise death will come
And take you by the ear to the true Kingdom and then regret will be of no avail.
O,Bilqees, if out of your own choice you do not embrace Islam now,
At Death your ear will be pulled just like a policeman pulls the ear of a thief at the police station.
O Bilqees, for how long are you going to continue stealing shoes from these donkeys.
If you are to steal, come and accept Islam and then start stealing rubies.
O Bilqees, your believing sisters have acquired the everlasting wealth

of Islam and Imaan
And here you are still pleased with this despicable world.
Blessed is the one who has been freed from this temporary world.
For death will come and take away this world and its pleasures
And the good one is he who does not put his mouth to this unfaithful world.
O Bilqees, arise and come to witness the everlasting Kingdom of Kings of deen,
Which they carry around with them as they walk".

(They are as Allah explains: *"They have a noor with which they walk among men."* Allah grants a noor in the hearts of the righteous believers, which they take with them as they walk among men. That noor is their garden and their springtime but ordinary men do not see it).

"Come and fly in the heavens without wings and feathers
Like the sun, the full moon and the crescent moon".

(In other words: Learn Allah's love and connect yourself to the Lord of the Throne so that you become enlightened like the sun or the full moon).

"O Bilqees, through the blessings of embracing Imaan
You will at all times experience the inner Kingdom and possess the Royal Throne.
Because He who blesses kings with Throne and Crown
Will always be with you in your heart,
So imagine your Kingdom and good fortune.
O You who have been blessed with the great treasure of Allah's love and nearness
And been endowed with this everlasting wealth.
Your life is in itself a great bounty,
At death When all shall be separated,
Your Kingdom of Allah's love will not be separated from you".

(In other words, the great wealth of inner nearness to Allah which has entered your life, your soul will take it with, to be presented before Allah because your Kingdom and wealth has become your self).

Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) gave this invitation to Bilqees to enter Islam, saying to her: *"O Bilqees, discard this outer world of your Kingdom of worldly wealth and create spiritual wealth within yourself. Through that all the pomp and splendour will be created inside you and there will be no need to involve yourself with outer show of pomp and splendour. In the retention of those outer signs of wealth you only appear to be fortunate, but in fact you and your fortune are two different things. The two of you are contrasting entities. But if you embrace Islam, fortune will become your very existence through the blessings of your inner wealth and thereafter that wealth will remain with you forever more."*

THE STORY OF NABI MOOSA (A.S.) INVITING FIR-AUN TO ISLAM

Nabi Moosa (A.S.) said to Fir-aun: *"Accept my one plea to you and be blessed with four bounties".*

Fir-aun asked: *"What is your one plea?"*

Nabi Moosa (A.S.) said: *"Announce publicly that there is no God save Allah. He is the creator of the heavenly bodies on high and the stars. Here on earth, He is the creator of men, Shaytaans, Jinn and animals. He is also the creator of mountains, the oceans, the forests and the deserts. His Kingdom is unlimited and He is without equal and without a likeness. He is the watcher over every person and supervisor over every place in the universe. He grants sustenance to every living being. He is the keeper of the heavens and the earth. He creates flowers in plants and is aware of the inner secrets of the hearts of men. He is the Ruler over the rebellious ones and the punisher of them. He is King over every King. His is the right to rule with authority. And whatever He wishes, He does. No one can oppose Him.*

Fir-aun listened to all this and asked: "*What are the four things that I will receive in exchange for that? Perhaps the promise of those things will cause my belief to become weak and through my acceptance of Islam the locks of unbelief of numerous other souls may be broken and they will also embrace Islam. Perhaps through these things our land may become green and fertile with the true knowledge of Allah. Quickly tell me what those four things are, for it is possible that the door towards my Hidaayat will open up*".

Nabi Moosa (A.S.) then through the command of Allah started mentioning to him the four promises. He said to him: "If you embrace Islam, you will remain in good health always and will never become sick. You will continue to be desirous of death. (In other words, in accepting Islam you will have formed such a close contact with Allah that through it you will see the prospects of such a treasure, that you will in expectancy thereof make all your selfish desires become subject and subordinate to the pleasure and wishes of Allah. You will be prepared to exert yourself spiritually to such an extent that you will even be prepared to sacrifice your life. If in someone's house there is a treasure buried, that person will willingly and with pleasure be prepared to break down that house to get to the treasure. So also the true lovers and seekers after Allah will be prepared to destroy their lustful desires, in order to attain the pleasure of Allah and close contact with Him. After this destruction, the great bounty and favour they acquire is the envy of the whole world. It is only after one tears away the clouds of desire, that the true light of the sun shines through).

O Fir-aun, just as the worms attacking the vine's green leaves deprive the plants of producing grapes, so also does this despicable world make you busy with the pleasures of the flesh. But when Allah's bounty and favour prevails, then you will become wakeful and aware and discard the worldly pleasures and become busy with the truth. The result will be that every vein and fibre of yours will be filled with the remembrance of Allah and you will become endowed with the character of Allah.

The third promise is this: At the moment you have one Kingdom at your disposal but after embracing Islam, you will have two Kingdoms. The Kingdom you now possess was given to you in the time when you were rebelling against Allah. You can imagine that in your state of obedience to Him what great gifts you will receive. If you had received so much during the time when you were an unjust one against His commands, how much will be your prize for obeying Him?

The fourth thing that you will receive is that you will remain forever young and your hair will remain black. This is but an insignificant bounty in my opinion. It is granted like the promise to a small child to whom the promise is made: *"If you go to the Madrassa, I will give you a walnut"*. In actual fact, in comparison with the knowledge that the child is to receive by going to Madrassa, the walnut is insignificant".

Listening to these promises, Fir-aun's heart became inclined to Islam to a certain extent. He said: *"All right, I shall consult with my wife"*.

He then went to his house to consult with his wife Aasiya (R.A.), who gave him some sound and wonderful words of advise as Moulana Rumi (R.A.) explains in the following chapter.

THE STORY OF FIR-AUN CONSULTING WITH HIS WIFE AASIYA (R.A.) OVER EMBRACING ISLAM

Fir-aun went home and told the whole story to his wife. She replied: *"You should sacrifice your life for such promises"*.

"This conversation is the detailed description of many favours, which
are like the text,
So you should quickly acquire those favours and never leave them.

The crop is ready for the harvest and it is most beneficial
Up to now all the time that has passed by went by without benefit".

She said this and began to cry bitterly. Then she again was filled with vigour and said: "Be blessed, O bald-headed one. The Sun has become your crown. Nabi Moosa (A.S.) has hidden your evil deeds and now wishes to give you a wealth of inner treasure. The fault of a bald-headed one can be hidden by a simple hat, but your faults Allah wishes to cover through the crown of His Mercy. O Fir-aun, my advise to you is this: Do not wait for consultation. You should have accepted that invitation to embrace Islam in that very gathering. The offer that Nabi Moosa (A.S.) gave you is not of an insignificant nature, that you should search for advise. It is such a thing that if it was placed before a creature of high rank like the Sun, it would immediately and willingly come from the heavens to the earth to accept it. Do you realise what a promise this is and do you realise what a gift this is? O Fir-aun, this is such a mercy from Allah as was the mercy that came to Iblees. It is not Allah's way to treat a rebellious and unjust one like you with such kindness.

I am surprised that on seeing this kindness, you don't burst open out of pleasure and satisfaction. I am surprised that you are still intact. If your gallbladder had burst open out of pleasure and satisfaction, you would have received reward in both worlds - a good name in this world and salvation in the hereafter.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that whosoever's gallbladder bursts open with sorrow or pleasure and dies, is a martyr (Shaheed) and will enjoy the benefits of both worlds. Moulana Rumi (R.A.) further says: "When evil ones confront saintly ones, they try to change the saintly ones to their line of thinking and ways. When the saintly ones refuse to change, they begin to cause them injury and hurt. The Angels will take up the tears of the saints in their mouths and on their wings and Allah will weigh them in similar fashion and to the same extent as He values the

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blood of the martyrs.

Hazrat Aasiya (R.A.) told Fir-aun:

"O Fir-aun! Do not doubt or hesitate! Give of yourself one drop
And in return acquire from the Messenger of Allah a whole ocean".

(In other words, bend down your self and avoid all pride and become honoured with Allah's nearness).

"Allah! Allah! Why do you delay in accepting the invitation?
This is great sympathy for you that the sea is itself calling for you with such insistence.
Quickly sell yourself into the hands of the ocean which invites you.
Quickly run and seek the ocean.
It is an ocean of Mercy and not any insignificant little stream.
If you are without hands and feet and unable to reach the ocean of your own accord,
Place yourself into the obedience of Moosa (A.S.), become a ball for Moosa (A.S.) and he will become your feet.
O Fir-aun, do not doubt the promises he made to you
And do not consider them to be mere deception.
Allah! Allah! Come forward to acquire those bountiful favour quickly
And do not become destroyed through wrong conceptions.
And when Allah Himself is seeking you out, do not hesitate or delay
As far as is possible, hurry up and bend your heart before Allah.
Allah! Allah! Quickly start making righteous deeds
And become happy through the glad tidings coming to you.
Allah! Allah! For how much longer are you going to be rebellious?
And for how long are you to keep your neck high in arrogance?
Allah! Allah! When that Allah is making you ashamed of your sins
Therefore give thanks to Him.
Allah! Allah! When Allah through His Grace gives you the path towards Him
Then bend down your neck in submission to Him.
Allah! Allah! O Fir-aun, see how in spite of your blasphemy He

still accepts you,
Is this favour and gift not something to be greatly appreciated?
All Graceful favours are nothing in the face of His Grace
Because an earthly being reaches up to the Seventh Heaven
And a human being can become angelic.
O Fir-aun who can get such a market,
Where in exchange for one rose a whole bed of roses is given?
Who can find such a market where in exchange for one seed,
A hundred trees is given and for one seed numerous ears of corn?"

Hearing all this from Aasiya (R.A.), Fir-aun said: *"All right, I shall now consult with my Chief Minister, Haamaan".*

Hazrat Aasiya (R.A.) said to him: *"Do not tell him about this. Do not consult with him because he is not fit to be consulted. How can a blind one appreciate the Royal Falcon?"* But Fir-aun did not listen to her and proceeded to consult with Haamaan.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says: *"The consultant of an unsuitable one is himself unsuitable".* For this reason Rasulullah ﷺ used to consult with Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه who was a suitable consultant while Abu Jahl used to consult with Abu Lahab. Every person consults with someone similar to himself.

So when Haamaan heard the story from Fir-aun, he leaped, jumped about and in sorrow he tore his garment to pieces. He made a big noise, and starting to cry aloud, throwing his turban on the ground he said: *"Alas, Moosa (A.S.) has insulted you, my sire. You are after all such that the whole universe is submissive to you. From the East and the West everybody brings their tribute to you. Kings and Rulers willingly kiss the dust of your house. He has degraded you greatly. You are the one to whom the whole world prostrates and whom they all worship. And yet you want to listen to him and become an ordinary slave. You being Lord, now want to consult with me about becoming a slave of another slave. In my opinion it is better for you to be burnt in a thousand fires than to be insulted and degraded like this. If you are going to accept the invitation to embrace*

Islam, then kill me first, so that I do not see this insult to you with my eyes. Strike my neck quickly so that I do not see that sight, that heaven should become earth or that a God should become a slave. In other words, that our slave should become our Master and we become his slave".

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) at this stage rebukes Haamaan saying: *"O Haamaan, You rejected one, how many governments were there not in this world, stretching from east to west, but today there is no sign of them left on this earth? It seems today, as if they never existed. Even the east and the west will not remain forever. So how can they keep others to remain?"*

"This pride and arrogance in Haamaan was a poisonous killer
And from such poisonous drink he was drunk and became foolish".

Through this advise of Haamaan, Fir-aun declined to accept the truth and thereby handed himself over to everlasting disgrace and punishment. May Allah save us all from arrogance and pride and the rejection of truth, Ameen.

When Fir-aun came under the influence of Haamaan's misleading deceit and rejected Nabi Moosa's (A.S.) invitation, Nabi Moosa (A.S.) said to him: *"We have been very generous and graceful to you, but it is not in your good fortune to accept it. So what is there that we can do?"*

THE STORY OF MAJNOON AND HIS CAMEL

Once Majnoon was sitting on his camel going towards the house of Layla. But as he became drowned in thoughts about Layla, in this state of being besides himself - absent in mind - the reins of the camel became loose in his hand. The camel then instead of going towards the house of Layla, turned his direction towards home, where the camel had a little one for which it was besides itself with love.

When Majnoon recovered from his state of absentmindedness, he became quite distressed and perplexed. The camel had gone back to where it had set out from. He again forced the camel to take the route towards Layla's house. But it happened quite a few times that after travelling for a short while, thoughts about Layla would occupy his mind and while he was in an absent-minded state the camel would turn back. In the end Majnoon became angry and he said: *"My Layla is in front and this camel's Layla is at the back of us"*. Its little one makes it turn back. For this reason, this path of love cannot be traversed. And during this whole life of mine, I will not be able to reach my Beloved"

Hence he jumped from the top of the camel. He fell and broke his one leg.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) now says:

"Life is starving through being separated from the Lord of the Throne, Who is the truly Beloved.
But the body in search of means of livelihood, like the camel, goes in an opposite direction".

Then Majnoon said:

"Now I have become a ball
And I roll along, as the bats of Layla's love drives me along".

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) now gives the advise from this story: For the love of Layla who is a mere corpse that will become rotten, Majnoon makes so much effort. But we who are supposed to be the Lovers of the Lord, how can our love be any less. It is more fitting that we should for the sake of His love become like a ball to be driven about.

LESSON

At this time the reason for our negligence and unmindfulness of the hereafter is that our soul and mind want to move in the direction of Allah, but our 'nafs' and desires are inclined towards the greed and love of the world and hence moving in that direction. At all times we have this struggle with our *'nafs'* while we get to do with the world and its Layla. So what we should do is to accept that Layla which is everlasting and to be patient with regard to that Layla which is of temporary nature. This does not mean that we should discard this world completely and go into the forests. That would be a foolish line of action. What is suitable is to make one's love of the hereafter overwhelm one's love of the world. That is sufficient. But the courage for this is only acquired through love and contact with a saintly figure and being like a slave to him.

THE STORY OF THE PERSON WALKING WITH A LAMP BY DAY

One day a certain person took a burning lamp in his hand during the light of day as he proceeded to the market. Someone said to him: *"What is wrong with you? What need is there for a lamp during the light of day?"*

He replied: *"I am searching for man everywhere. I do not see even one man"*.

The person said: *"But this market is filled with men"*.

He replied: *"No there is no man in this market, only the outer forms of men.*

These are only bread-eaters and persons involved with their desires.
All the persons you see in this market are all carriers of attributes
contrary to the true manhood.
They are not men but persons dressed in the outer forms of men.
For a man the attributes of manhood are necessary.
If aloe wood which has a fragrance, does not possess fragrance,
Then what is the difference between it and other timber?
Manhood and humanity is not the name for flesh, fat and skin.
Manhood is the name given to those attributes, character and deeds
Through which Allah's pleasure is attained.

If manhood is only for those in manly form,
Then Ahmad and Abu Jahl would be equal, yet we know it is not so".

LESSON

If we should on the above criteria take stock of our manhood and humanity, then on the whole surface of the earth the only real men will be the saintly ones. The rest of those who are supposed to be human beings are only eating and defecating ones, who are busy with their objectives and what is connected to them.

The best example of this is the machine grinding flour. At the one side the corn is entered into it and at the other end the flour comes out. Similarly, the human body of those who only eat and defecate is also a machine, where on the one side bread is entered into it and at the other side the faeces are coming out of it. It is thus a machine producing faeces and excreta. So those who only look upon their aims in life as eating and defecating are actually calling their bodies a machine producing excreta. May Allah save us from this stupid theory.

Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) other theme that man is not a name for flesh and fat, covered in human skin but it is a name for him who does that which pleases Allah. The signs of it being so is that the person becomes adorned with deeds and character which lead to His pleasure. Such a person undoubtedly is fit being called a man. He has the contact of *'nisbat'* within him. Nabi Adam's (A.S.) special description is this that he uttered the cry: *"Rabbanaa Zalamnaa Anfusanaa wa Illam tagh fir lanaa wa tarhamnaa lana koonanna minul khausireen"* meaning *"O Our Lord, we have been unjust to our own selves. And if You do not forgive us and have Mercy on us, we shall be of the losers".*

He cried thus for a lifetime so much so that from the tears he shed, small fountains started flowing and from them fragrant flowers, roses and jasmine were created (as is mentioned in the Tafseer Maha-imy).

Hence Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"Those people who are the special children of Adam, will like their
father
Cry: Rabbanaa Zalamnaa, over their sins, begging His pardon".

Through this theory of Moulana Rumi (R.A.) many an owner of huge mansions and motorcars but who do not possess the attributes of true servants of Allah Taala, should pass judgement over themselves as to whether they are great men or small men. In fact there is the doubt as to whether they are men at all. Great men are those who have kept Allah pleased with them. On the plain of the Reckoning, on the day of Qiyamat, every one will be brought to his correct level. If in this world it is said that this is a great man, because he owns a mansion stretching over 2 000 yards, or that he has three motorcars and is the owner of three factories, of what use is it going to be to him, when in the hereafter he will be looked upon as if he was just a sweeper.

Rasulullah ﷺ once asked: *"O people, do you know who is a great man?"*

He then informed them that a great man is one who is known as the *"As-haabu-Layl"* and *"Hamalatul-Quran"*. That is, he is one of those who stand up during the night to recite tuhajjad prayers and secondly he is one of those who not only recite the Quran but has made the Quranic lifestyle his habit. If he had been only a reciter of the Quran, Rasulullah ﷺ would have said *"Hafathatul-Quran"*.

May Allah make us the true exponents of manhood and humanity, Ameen. And may He enter into us the correct relationship with our father, Hazrat Adam (A.S.) and may He cause the true soul to enter our bodies, Ameen!

THE STORY OF THE SLAVE WHO DID NOT COME OUT OF THE MOSQUE

A certain rich man had a very religious-minded slave called Sanqar. One day this rich man and his slave were going somewhere. On the way they passed a Musjid and heard the Azaan being sounded from there. Sanqar said to his master: *"Please wait for me. I am going to perform Salaah".*

Sanqar went to the Musjid while his master, being overcome by his own pride and arrogance, went to sit down by a shop to wait for his slave.

"When the Imam and the congregation had performed the Salaah
And recited the after-salaah wazeefas,
And they came out, Sanqar remained in the mosque".

The master called out to him.

"O Sanqar, why do you not come out
Who has kept you there in the Musjid?"

Sanqar replied:

"O proud one, the One who did not allow you to come in,
Is the One who now does not allow me to come outside".

Sanqar who was experiencing Allah Taala's nearness, being engaged in zikr and prayers said *"O Master!, he who is not allowing you to come in, keeping you waiting for me outside by the shop, is not allowing me to come out of the Musjid."*

EXPLANATION

He whom Allah wishes to make His own favourite ones, this is the sign thereof.

"He does not allow the fish permission to come out of the water
And He does not allow the earthly being to dwell in the water.
The origins of fish is in the water and the origins of earthly beings
is the earth.

So how can water accept other than fish to dwell therein?
No deceit or contrivance can be useful.
The lock towards misguidance is solid. However the opener of the door of guidance is Allah.
Acquire the bounty of pleasure and submission for which humility and lamentation are required,
Through pride and contrivance this door is not opened.
If every atom of this world becomes a key
Still will the doors of guidance not be opened by anyone except Allah".

LESSON

The conclusion of this story is this that the ability and guidance towards doing righteous deeds lies in the hands of Allah. This door is not opened through knowledge, planning and use of the intellect, or pride over these things. This is only acquired through Allah's bounty and Divine Mercy. To acquire it, one has to lower himself before Allah by crying, begging and praying to Him.

THE STORY OF NABI ESA (A.S.) RUNNING AWAY FROM A FOOL

Once Nabi Esa (A.S.) was running towards the mountain. One of his followers shouted at him in a loud voice: *"O Rasul of Allah! whither are you going in this manner? What is the cause of your fear? I do not see any enemy following you".*

Nabi Esa (A.S.) replied:

"I am fleeing from a fool. You go and do your own work.
I desire to grant myself safety from the company of a fool. Do not interrupt my fleeing".

The follower said:

"O Messenger of Allah, Are you not that Messiah

Through whom the blind and the deaf were healed of their ailments?"

Hazrat Esa (A.S.) replied:

"The illness of foolishness is the wrath of Allah.
To be blind is not a punishment, but a trial from His side.
A trial is such a sickness which brings Allah's Mercy.
While foolishness is such an ailment which brings wounds of His wrath.
Flee from fools and like Nabi Esa (A.S.) prefer to run away.
The friendship of fools has caused much bloodshed
Both the blood of Deen and Dunya has flowed.
Just as air evaporates water slowly and gradually
So the fool takes away the light of your intelligence slowly and gradually.
Nabi Esa's (A.S.) running away was not out of fear,
For through the Grace of Allah,
He was sinless and protected, but he fled in order to teach his Ummat a lesson.
Even if the whole world becomes covered with intense cold,
What sorrow will there be for the sun which shines brightly?"
(Even if the whole world becomes filled with stupid fools,
What harm could that do to Allah's Rasool?)

LESSON

This story teaches us to remain far removed from the company of the foolish ones. A fool in the technical language of the Quran is that person who jeers and scoffs at Allah and His Rasool ﷺ and their injunctions. As Allah points out in the Quran: *"Verily they are the fools, but they know not (that they are fools)"*. – (Para 1, Ruku 2)

Because of the unperceived foolishness these people consider themselves to be the rational ones of this age, the knowledgeable ones and the thinkers and philosophers of the era. But the international definition of a rational being is to keep your mind on the end result of your action. In this they fail badly, as they have no thoughts for what is to happen after death.

For this reason, Allah describes them as follows:

"They only know the pomp and splendour of this worldly life. And regarding the hereafter, they are unmindful and neglectful".

So this world is the sum total of their knowledge and one should avoid their company. One should only meet with them if there is a need for it, just as it sometimes becomes necessary to visit a dirty toilet. In such a case the person closes his nose and sits in it out of necessity. However, he does not allow his heart to be attracted to the toilet. Just like that a person should not allow his heart to become attached to the dunya and the people of the *'Dunya'*.

"Live in this world like a ship on water,
Water causes the ship to sail,
As long as the water is outside the ship.
But as soon as the water enters the ship,
It is the cause of its destruction".

In similar way one should keep the dunya underneath the hereafter. The main objective is to attain the hereafter. Consider the world as a helping hand towards the hereafter. But if the dunya becomes in your mind superior to the hereafter and overwhelms it, then you should know that instead of being a help towards the hereafter, it is the beginning of one's destruction. And if one does not check this, he will soon see the day of complete destruction.

May Allah protect us from the company of foolish ones and from the love of this world overwhelming us.

"O Allah, do not make this world our greatest objective. Make it not the sum total of our knowledge. Make it not the end of our desires. Place not rulers over us, who show no Mercy to us.

O Allah, make Your Love more beloved to me than my self, my family and cold water", Ameen.

In the above first duah, there is a special connection between the first few things we ask and the last one. We ask Allah not to make this world our greatest object of our lives, and not to make it the sum total of our knowledge or the end of our desires. If any of these things do happen, then the reaction is this, that unmerciful ones will be granted to rule over us harshly. Hence we ask Allah not to let that happen to us.

THE STORY OF A TWO-MONTH OLD BABE CONVERSING WITH RASULULLAH ﷺ

A non-Muslim woman once, with a two month old baby, came to Rasulullah ﷺ to test the Prophet of Allah ﷺ

Before the Mother could even put a question to him
The small two month old baby said to Rasulullah ﷺ
"O Messenger of Allah, peace be upon you!
We have come into your presence".
The mother of the child became angry and said to the child:
"Beware and remain silent!
Who has put this testimony into your ears, for you to utter?"
The child replied:
"O My Mother, do you not see above your head?
Look above your head and see.
O Mother, above your head is Angel Jibreel (A.S.)
He is to me the embodiment of numerous proofs.
Do you see him? Quickly say: Yes!
There above your head is the angel like the moon in its fullness.
The angel is teaching me the attributes of the Rasool ﷺ,
And he is protecting me and freeing me from the unclean knowledge
of Kufr and Shirk (disbelief and polytheism)
Then Rasulullah ﷺ said:
"O milk suckling babe, tell me what is your name?

And obey my commands".

The child replied:

"My name in Allah's sight is Abdul Aziz,
However, these disgraceful polytheists have named me Abdul Uzzah.
But I do not believe in the idol Uzza. I have no connection with him,
Through the blessings of that Being, who sent you as a messenger.
At that time such a fragrance was released from paradise,
Which filled the minds of the mother and child.
He whose guardian is Allah, even the birds and fishes will protect him".

Together with the child even the mother embraced Islam. The mother recited the Kalima (creed of faith) and became a Muslim.

THE STORY OF AN EAGLE TAKING RASULULLAH'S ﷺ SOCKS

Once Rasulullah ﷺ after performing wudhu wanted to put on his leather socks. An eagle came along, took one of the socks in its mouth and flew away. Rasulullah ﷺ was quite surprised at this and quite distressed. However, after a short while, the eagle came back, turned the sock upside down towards the ground and a black snake fell out of it. Then the eagle presented the sock to Rasulullah ﷺ and said:

"O Messenger of Allah, the reason for this flying with the sock was that a snake was hidden inside it;
This was the cause of my insulting behaviour.
Allah ordered me to protect you, otherwise I had no other duty
Than to be submissive and utterly respectful towards you."
Rasulullah ﷺ expressed his gratitude to Allah and said:
"The incident which I considered a sad affair
Was actually a case of loyalty and mercy.
O Eagle you carried my sock away and I became displeased

You made me sad and I considered it a case of grief”.

The eagle replied:

“O Beloved ﷺ for you this incident is a lesson of warning from Allah
So that you may be pleased with every verdict of Allah
And consider it as a means of goodness.
And accept with pleasure from Allah if anything contrary to your wish takes place.
That anything which outwardly appears to harm you by Divine verdict
You may be certain that it is for your welfare and good.
Should any calamity take place, do not become saddened
And be not grief-stricken when any loss occurs.
Because whatever calamity overtakes you wards off a greater calamity
And any loss occurring is to ward off a greater loss”.

The eagle said:

“While flying in the air, I saw the snake inside the sock.
This was not as a result of my own speciality.
No! it was a reflection of your own light and your own blessings.
And Allah in His wisdom kept the snake hidden from you
To give a special lesson”.

LESSON

The lesson in this story is that a person should not become impatient and unduly worried when a calamity comes. Instead one should think that it has come to ward off a greater calamity. In other words, one should always pray for safety and make plans in that direction, but be patient over any calamity that comes his way from Allah Taala. The thought that it has come to ward off greater calamity, is a consolation and eases the pain and suffering.

THE STORY OF A KING AND HIS BELOVED

Once a King went on a hunting trip. Along the way he saw a young slave-girl and fell in love with her. He purchased her from her master and brought her back to the palace with him. (He went out hunting and himself became a victim).

This slave-girl had been in love with the son of a goldsmith of Samarqand. When she came to the palace of the King, she started longing for him and felt so much sorrow at being parted from him, that she started losing weight. She lost so much of weight and became so weak that she remained only skin and bones. The King himself seeing her suffering came near to death. He thus called many doctors to treat her and promised them various kinds of gifts and positions of honour if they could restore her to good health, saying: *"Save my life, because if she should die, then just think that I too am dead"*.

The doctors without saying Insha-Allah, promised that very soon they will bring the sick girl back to full health. However, their medication and treatment had the opposite effect upon her.

"When the verdict of sickness comes, the doctors too become fools.
And their medicines as a result, have the opposite effect.
Through destiny, the treatment was causing the sickness to increase
And almond oil caused an increase in dryness".

(In other words, every medicine had the opposite effect).

In the end the doctors had to admit their failure because their claims of providing a cure for her sickness, proved unsuccessful.

"When the King saw the inability of the doctors and their disappointment
He walked towards the mosque with bare-feet.
He went to the mosque, ran towards the mihraab, fell down in prostration
And cried profusely. He wetted his place of prostration with his tears".

He said, crying bitterly:

"O Allah, all this universe is a mere speck of your creation.
What can I say to you? You are aware of all our problems.
Our lack of trust in You and the condition of these doctors who failed to say: 'Insha-Allah',
Is insignificant in the face of your bountiful grace.
O You who are our Refuge in times of our needs
Again we have strayed from the straight path".

When the King cried and lamented before Allah in such sincerity and humility, the ocean of Allah's Mercy was stirred into action. Crying, the King fell asleep. In his dream he saw a saintly man saying to him: *"O King, do not lose hope. I shall treat your beloved back to health".*

When the King awoke he found himself very much happier. That saintly man, whom he had seen in the dream suddenly, appeared in front of him. The King welcomed him with due respect and honour.

Thereafter, the saint checked the slave-girl's urine and checked her pulse. He put his hand on her pulse and mentioned the names of various towns. When he named Samarqand, the pulse rate became faster. He diagnosed from this that the sickness she had was as a result of her love for someone in Samarqand and not what the doctors thought.

"People were unaware of the secrets of the inner self
I seek refuge in Allah from what they fabricate".

When the Sheikh came to know the secret of the girl's sickness, that she was in love with the son of a goldsmith of Samarqand, the Sheikh ordered the King to call him over, bribing him with wealth. The Sheikh was also a good physician. He gave the young man medicines which caused him to lose his handsome appearance. Then again he was presented before the girl.

When she saw him, her love for him evaporated because his outward form had changed so drastically, that it created an aversion in her for him. The girl was released of her love for him and became well and healthy. Within a few days she completely recovered.

"Because the girl's love was a mere worship of outward form,
Hence through changing of that form, gradually the love disappeared
And she was healed.
The love that is merely as a result of colour and complexion is not love at all
It is in fact evil and its end result is only shame and disgrace.
For the love of a dying one is not lasting
Because the dying are not coming to us but are leaving us.
(So when the beloved passes away, this love also passes away).
Allah, who is Everlasting and free from passing away.
His Love is also more fresh, than a newly-formed rose-bud.
O Seeker, choose the love of the Living One, who remains forever,
And who grants love and knowledge, who gives you to drink of the most animating drink.
And say not in hopeless fashion: How can unfit ones like myself
Ever reach up to that beloved.
For He is a generous one, and for the generous that is not difficult".

(It is not difficult as the Hadith teaches us. He who draws near to Me the length of a palm, I draw near to him one yard. In other words, His door is open at all times. Whosoever wishes may enter and acquire His nearness).

LESSON

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that this story is applicable to all of us according to our individual conditions. The soul is made a King over our *'nafs'*, so that the nafs can be made to function in accordance with the will of Allah and thereby enter paradise.

But the nafs which is a servant of the soul, is inclined towards the desires of the world. As a result of that it disobeys the soul. Moreover generally the physicians of our environment are incompetent and unable to treat this sickness. For this reason there is need for a Sheikh (Spiritual Guide) whose carefully prescribed remedy makes sinful worldly pleasures appear ugly in our eyes, so that the *'nafs'* may obey the Soul. In other words, the *'nafs'* will then find it easy to walk on the path of Divine pleasures.

THE TREATMENT AGAINST LOOKING ON EVIL AND FIGURATIVE LOVE

(By Hakim Akhtar)

O God of this Universe, God of Beauty and Love
A great trial for men is figurative beauty and love
If love is felt for others save You (i.e. illicit love)
Then that is not love but in fact is iniquity.
That love can prove to be your punishment,
And can be a hindrance on your path.
For this reason the command is given: "Cast down your gaze,"
So that the heart can be without damage from the poison of love.
Don't ever consider looking at evil as a minor sin,
It destroys the heart in quick time.
Looking at evil is like an arrow from Iblees.
It is deception drowned in poison.
How many have been destroyed in this path?
How many have lost the way in the path of this desire?
They have lost in this way their whole life
The value of their lives is just remembrance of a beloved.
This figurative beauty only lasts for limited number of days
It is only for a couple of days that the conspiracy lasts
The love that is of colour and complexion
Is like the lovers love of the sun over the shade.
Those who themselves are helpless and in need
On the day of Judgement they and their lovers

Will be before Allah with blackened souls.

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwy (R.A.) says:

Figurative, perishable love is everlasting punishment.
If the heart desires any other than Allah
This is intoxication from the wine of Allah's punishment.
If a soul should turn from figurative to true love,
Then that soul will be endowed with purity.
He has then become alive, rising from the graveyard
And has entered the rose-garden from a thorny world.
From the thorns he has turned his attention away,
And now with the heart he sees the truly beloved.
Through remembrance of Allah, he who has found peaceful tranquillity,
For him even the Autumn will be Springtime.
Light has come and the fires of lustful desires are extinguished,
As if Autumn has changed into Spring.
Hardhearted and merciless is this one,
Selfish and faithless this delicate one.
Of bad habits and ugly disposition
Of a certainty it is an idol that appears beautiful.
When the love of other than Allah shall leave the heart
There will be tranquillity and ecstasy of Springtime.
In this life will then be the rising of the sun
And the opening of the door towards the good life.
Smoke was the curtain of the lamp of the dead
Greatly jealous was the light of the sun.
When there was in the heart the thorns of love of other than Allah
Then there was in it darkness and distress.
Alas what will they see of the sights of Spring
He who is not occupied with remembrance and thoughts of the Beloved?
The Saqi will keep him thirsty his whole life long
If he has drunk from the cup the poison of evil looks.
And when the heart is busy with the thoughts of others

How can it experience pleasure in obedience and Zikr?
The heart of yours is occupied with thoughts at every moment
Thus the Light of Life does not come into it.
O Lord, if You so wish, You can cleanse me of all evils,
Through Your Grace.
For You this is no difficult task.
That I may remain Yours in love
That I may mention Your Holy Name in heartfelt pain.
That whosoever of men may hear my sighs
Will become agitated in love for You.
O Lord, make Akhtar's heart become filled with love for you
And make my heart inhabited with noor".

THE STORY OF A WOMAN CRYING BEFORE ALLAH OVER THE LOSS OF HER CHILDREN

A certain woman used to give birth to children but none of these children remained alive. All of them after six months became sick and died. In this manner twenty of her children died and went to the graveyard.

"Twenty children, one after the other, went that way
And this caused great sorrow to rise up in her".

During the latter part of the night, she rose up from her bed and fell down in prostration before her Lord, crying bitterly in sorrow as she poured out her heart in supplication. Thereafter, she went to sleep, she saw in a dream, herself wandering around in paradise. She also saw a most beautiful mansion on which her name was written. From the beauty of the gardens of paradise and its splendour, she became besides herself with pleasure.

The angels told her:

"O Woman, generally these bounties from Allah are acquired through the performance of Ibaadat and strenuous spiritual strivings. But because you were inactive in that respect and thus unable to reach

that position, Allah sent those difficulties to you in the world, during which you were patient. In return for that patience, He grants you this paradise and this mansion".

Then she saw her children there in paradise. She said: "*O Lord! these children of mine were concealed from my sight, but they were never hidden from You. Here they are all present. O Lord, if for a thousand years you keep me as I am today, I have no regret. Even if, You should shed my blood, I will be satisfied. For these favours are much more than my patience".*

THE STORY OF A CHILD BEING THROWN INTO A FIRE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS MOTHER

A Jewish King told a woman: "*Prostrate before this idol otherwise you will be cast into a burning fire".*

She refused to prostrate before the idol and remained steadfast on her faith and on tawheed. The King then grabbed the baby from her arms and threw the child into the fire. The mother was greatly distressed at this and her faith was greatly tested by the event. She came very near to death out of anxiety. But suddenly the little child started speaking from out of the midst of the fire:

"I am alive and I have not died in this fire.
O Mother come into this fire
I am in great pleasure, even though it appears I am in a flaming fire.
O Mother come into this fire so that you too may see Allah's miracle
And so that you too can see the comfort and ease of Allah's special bondsmen
Even though in the eyes of the world they are in calamity.
O Mother, come in, so that you too can see how the fire of Namrud
Became like a bed of roses for Ibraheem.
And how in the fire he found a springtime of roses and jasmine.
At the time you gave birth to me,

I feared it was death to me.
But when I was born I was released from a very narrow world
And in my opinion, I had entered a beautiful world.
However after seeing paradise this world would appear small and narrow like the mother's stomach.
In this fire I have seen another world
Whose every atom is a gift of life.
O Mother, come inside for the sake of your motherhood
Come in and see that this fire has not the effect of fire,
For the Mercy of Allah has converted it into a garden.
O Mother, you have seen the power of the Jewish dog,
Now come in so that you may witness the power of Allah's grace.
O Mother, come inside and call others also to come,
Because my Lord had spread the tablecloth of His kindness inside.
O Muslims, come inside all of you and experience
The sweetness of deen, which is sweeter than all other worldly pleasures".

The mother then threw herself into the midst of the fire and the child grabbed her by the arm. Then all the people around there jumped into the fire and experienced the grace of Allah.

"The Jewish King became ashamed and embarrassed
His plan proved to be against himself,
Because people began to long to jump into the fire
And in sacrificing their bodies, they proved to be true in faith.
Whatever signs of insult or disgrace unworthy ones try to put on the faces of saintly ones,
These signs of disgrace will get stuck upon their own faces".

The Jewish King then addressed the fire: *"What is wrong with you? You refuse to show Mercy to those who worship you, and grant refuge and safety to these sons of Towheed, while causing me disgrace and embarrassment. Who has practised sorcery upon you? What is this? What has happened to your speciality of burning?"*

The fire replied: *"O you disbeliever, I am that same fire. You come*

to me so that you may taste that same burning heat.
My temperament and my true reality has not changed
I am a sword of Allah but only cut with permission from Him.
For this reason, when you feel grief and sorrow
Beg his forgiveness from sins committed,
Because sorrow only comes through His command.
When through the blessings of seeking pardon,
Allah becomes pleased, He will remove punishment.
And when the command of Allah comes, sorrow also becomes pleasure.
And a prisoner is released.
Air, sand, water and fire are all slaves of Allah, even though lifeless they may be.
But in Allah's sight they are alive and for them to carry out
His commands is not far-fetched at all".

THE STORY OF THE WIND'S DESTRUCTION OF THE PEOPLE OF NABI HOOD (A.S.)

It is related that when a strong wind was sent against the people of Nabi Hood (A.S.), Nabi Hood (A.S.) drew a circle around those who believed in him. When the wind reached that circle, it blew softly and gently. People who were outside the line were torn to pieces by the wind.

In similar fashion Hazrat Shaybaan Raa'ee (R.A.) used to draw a circle around his flock of sheep when he went for Jumaa Salaah so that no wolf could carry off any sheep while he was away.

Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"In this fashion over the Saints of Allah the wind of death blows
Like the morning garden breeze, soft and pleasant.
The fire did not burn Nabi Ibrahim (A.S.) when he was a chosen friend of Allah
Now at the time of passing away how would the fire have the courage

to cause him harm?
Similarly the fire of desires and lust cannot burn the true followers of the deen
But it causes the irreligious ones to be brought to hell-fire".

THE STORY OF A MOSQUITO'S COMPLAIN TO NABI SULAYMAN (A.S.)

A mosquito came before Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) with its complaint.

He said: *"O You, whose Kingdom stretches over men and jinn and over the air. Please eradicate my misfortune and judge for me in justice".*

Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) asked: *"O you who searches for justice, against whom do you require a just verdict?"*

The mosquito replied: *"My complaint is against the wind. The wind causes me great grief and harm. When I try to suck blood, the wind blows me away. This is unjust and unfair".*

Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) said: *"O Mosquito, Allah has commanded me not to give judgement until both parties to a dispute are present and given a fair hearing."*

The Mosquito replied: *"Undoubtedly that is the right thing".*

Then Nabi Sulayman (A.S.)summoned the wind to appear before him quickly because a complaint of injustice has been lodged against him. As soon as the wind received the summons, it came along blowing quite strongly as it hastened to the presence of Nabi Sulayman (A.S.). As soon as the strong wind arrived, involuntarily it forced the mosquito to be blown away.

Nabi Sulayman (A.S.) called upon him: *"O Mosquito, wait a while".*

"O Mosquito, where are you going, wait!
I shall now judge between the two of you".

The Mosquito replied:

"O King, my death lies in the existence of the wind.
It's smoke makes my day black indeed.
When the wind comes, I experience no ease and comfort.
He destroys me, by tearing me away from my place".

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) gives advise to the seekers after the Sufi way:

He says: Similar is the case of the seeker after Allah. When he has attained some nearness to Him, the closeness of Allah will cause his fleeing from evil. Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says that for the nearness of Allah to be properly attained, it is necessary that one should become fully engrossed in serving Him and be completely annihilated in Him. That is the sign of being truly endowed with Allah's nearness. Hence for as long as a person's *'nafs'* is alive and still has arrogance in it, it is impossible to acquire nearness to Allah. One will have to destroy his ego.

"Even though in nearness to Allah, there is lasting existence,
But before this lasting existence, annihilation of the self is required".

By *'annihilation'* is meant to make your own desires subject to the Divine wishes and to make them a slave of Allah, surrendered to Him. How can that one be a servant to Allah, who wants to keep his wishes above that of Allah?

LESSON

This story teaches us that only after one has annihilated his *'nafs'* will he be honoured with sainthood. This annihilation is dependent upon the company of a saintly one, as Moulana Rumi (R.A.) has said somewhere else:

"A nafs cannot be annihilated unless one has the shadow of a spiritual guide's guidance.
Hence hold fast onto the cloth of such a destroyer of nafs".

My Sheikh and Murshid (R.A.) says that here the phrase says: *"Hold fast onto". The reason for exhorting us to hold fast onto the* *spiritual guide is that sometimes the Sheikh may reprimand or punish a 'mureed' to correct him. At such times if one is loosely connected with him, he will become offended and run away from him, which will be to his own detriment. As Moulana Rumi (R.A.) states somewhere else:"*

"If at every rebuke of the Sheikh you become fed up,
Then how without rubbing can you become clean as a mirror?"

THE STORY OF THE MOURNING TREE

Rasulullah ﷺ initially used to lean upon the trunk of a date palm while delivering the sermon in the mosque in Madina. Later when the tree was cut to make way for the construction of a solid mimbar, the date palm trunk began to cry out aloud like a child cries on being parted from its mother. It was deeply grieved that Rasulullah ﷺ would no more lean against it. Moulana Rumi (R.A.) refers to this crying and mourning in these lines:

"Because of being parted from Rasulullah ﷺ, the pillar of mourning
Began crying bitterly just like a rational human being.
Through this crying the companions were surprised and astounded
That this wooden trunk in all its length and width was crying so
bitterly.
Rasulullah ﷺ asked: O pillar, what is it you desire?
He replied: O Rasul of Allah ﷺ, the sorrow of being parted from
you is turning my life to blood.
Being parted from you is causing my life to be burnt up inside me.
And through this burning sorrow why should I not cry and lament
After all you are the life of the universe.
I used to be your leaning place, now you have parted from me
And in my place you have chosen another sitting place".

Rasulullah ﷺ replied: *"O Blessed pillar, do you wish that I pray to Allah that you remain a green and fruitful tree and that everyone of the East and of the West should derive benefit from eating your fruits.*

Or do you desire something of the hereafter and to always remain green and fresh?"

The pillar of mourning replied: *"O Rasulullah ﷺ, I desire everlasting bounty from Allah".*

Now Moulana Rumi (R.A.) gives advise: *"O you unmindful and negligent ones, listen to this. You should take a lesson from the piece of wood. You, being human, are attracted to this temporary world and turning your back upon the hereafter, whereas that mourning pillar is giving preference to the everlasting bounties, over temporary and passing pleasures."*

"Thereafter the wooden pillar of mourning was buried under the earth
So that like mankind it will be raised up on the day of resurrection for its reward".

NOTE:

The crying of this pillar of wood was one of the miracles of Rasulullah ﷺ

THE STORY OF THE MIRACLE OF THE GRAVEL PEBBLES

Once Abu Jahl had some gravel pebbles hidden in his hand. He asked Rasulullah ﷺ: *"If you are truly Allah's Messenger, tell me what I have in my hand? You inform people of things from beyond the heavens, therefore it should be easy for you to tell me what is in my hand".*

Rasulullah ﷺ replied: *"Shall I inform you of what is in your hand, or should the things in your hand themselves tell you who I am?"*

Abu Jahl retorted: *"I would like both things".*

Rasulullah ﷺ said: *"There are six pebbles in your hand".*

Then at the command of Rasulullah ﷺ every one of the pebbles began to recite the Kalima Shahaadah. When Abu Jahl saw this miracle, he became so angry that he threw the pebbles hard on the ground and turned to go home.

May his head remain covered in dust. The accursed one remained blind to the truth and his eyes were like that of the accursed Iblees who saw Nabi Adam (A.S.) as a mere being created of dust. He could not see the soul which was crowned with the crown of prophethood. Of that he was completely unaware.

THE STORY OF THE PERSON CRYING OVER HIS DOG

A dog was dying of hunger. A person was sitting beside it and busy crying over the dying of the animal. Someone saw this and asked him: *"Why are you crying?"*

He replied: *"This dog had some very beautiful qualities. Now it is dying of hunger and starvation"*.

The man inquired: *"Tell me, what have you got in that basket which you are carrying on your head?"*

He replied: *"I have bread in it as food for my journey"*.

The man inquired: *"O you unjust one, why do you not feed the dog of the food for your journey?"*

He replied: *"My love for this dog is not that much that I should feed him of my bread"*.

The crying man said:
"Bread is not acquired without payment of money,
While the tears I shed in sorrow are acquired free of charge".

The passer by replied:
"May your head be covered in earth,
That in your sight a piece of bread is better than tears.

Tears are blood which through sorrow and grief turn to water.
So, O foolish one, how can blood be equal in value to dust?"

(Here bread is referred to as dust because corn grows from the earth).

From this Moulana Rumi (R.A.) gives advise: *"I am a bondsman of such a high-minded Sheikh (Shamsh Tabrezi) (R.A.) who would not exchange his existence for the world's greatest wealth and Kingdom. This spiritual guide of mine will only exchange his body and soul for the acquisition of Divine Love."* Hence, one should become servants of the true Walis of Allah Taala - those who are filled with the spirit of Allah. If we become slaves of a worldly one, the same fate awaits us as that of the dog, for whom two tears of hypocrisy were shed which proved to be of no use. People attached to material things cannot have ambitions, because they are connected to dust. The saints of Allah, because they are connected to Allah, His Throne and to the heavens, their spirit and ambition is higher than heavenly bodies. This is the special meaning of the verse Allah has inspired this humble servant with. All praise be to Allah for that I say this and in it there is no boasting.

Then Moulana Rumi (R.A.) says:

"O people, you have seen one type of tears which are less in value than bread. Now see another type of tears: See the tears of the Saints. When my spiritual guide Hazrat Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) cries, the effect of his sincerity and his pain causes the very heavens also to cry. And when my Sheikh cries out of His Great Divine Love, the very heavenly bodies tremble and shake, crying aloud: Ya Rab, Ya Rab! (O our Lord)
Our Shamsh Tabrezi prays in great humility and earnestness.
The Grace of Allah comes flying towards broken hearts, which laid their complaints before Him
And grants them the honour of acceptance".

THE STORY OF AYAAZ AND THOSE WHO WERE JEALOUS OF HIM

Ayaaz, one of the close courtiers of King Mahmood, built a room in which he spread his old leather jacket and torn and tattered clothing which he wore before becoming a servant of the King. He used to keep the room locked at all times. Occasionally he used to enter this room alone. Then, looking at his torn and tattered clothes and his leather coat, he used to cry, saying: *"O Allah, I am a son of a very poor family. I used to be in this torn and tattered state. This was my clothing of which today I am so ashamed that I keep it locked up. Not only will I not wear it in the presence of others, but I feel ashamed to even show it to them. In fact now I consider it an insult to let others come to know of them."*

Then he used to address himself saying: *"O Ayaaz, today you are a close courtier of the King. Do not be arrogant and proud of the shine and splendour you enjoy. For in reality you are like these tattered clothing."*

The other courtiers and ministers of the King did not know what was in the room. Seeing him entering and leaving this room, they started forming all kinds of opinions and ideas about the room and its contents.

One day all the King's courtiers gathered in one place. They exchanged ideas as to why Ayaaz was going into this room alone and why he was keeping the room locked at all times? The King loved him and considered him a saintly person. They thought that Ayaaz was stealing the King's wealth and hiding it in that room. They thought that if the King was to be informed of the treasure that was being kept in the room, then upon its discovery, Ayaaz would lose his position of nearness to the King. Secondly, if the King was to find the treasure, he would reward his informers. Hence the result of their mutual consultation was that King Mahmood should be informed of their suspicions. A delegation from among them went to the King and told him:

"The court officials told the King that Ayaaz has a room
In which is hidden gold, silver and carpets.
He does not permit anybody else to enter into it
And keeps the room locked at all times."

The King listened to them and said: *"At midnight, I am going to inspect that room. You all should remain with me during the inspection. Whatever wealth we shall find therein will be divided amongst you people".*

The King further said:

"Sorrow upon Ayaaz that in spite of so much respect and honour
That he enjoys from us,
He should involve himself in such a despicable act,
As to hoard gold and silver in secret.
Whoever has discovered the life of Divine Love,
For him it is ingratitude to become involved with beings other than Allah".

The King was quite convinced of the sincere love which Ayaaz had for him and had full confidence in his honesty. However, he was actually jeering at the courtiers and making a fool of them.

"The King had no mistrust in Ayaaz
He only tested the court officials and played the fool with the jealous ones.
It was impossible that Ayaaz could be untrue to the King
Because his faithfulness was unlimited.
Ayaaz was a King among Kings, in fact he was a King in the making
And it was only for protection against an evil eye that he was called Ayaaz.
King Mahmood was aware of his innocence and purity of life
And only to rectify those who envied him that he decided to inspect".

Later in the middle of the night, the room was opened. When the court officials could not find anything they said: *"The treasure must be under the ground. Hence, the floor of the room was dug up,* *but still they found nothing".*

"Everybody was quite surprised and distressed as to what excuse to give before the King
And worried as to how they were going to save themselves from their false accusations.
Finally in despair, they bit their hands and lips
And like women they put their hands on their heads in shame".

They all came before the King and said:

"Whatever punishment you wish to meet out to us, we are prepared to accept. We deserve such punishment. But if you pardon us, (it will be good) for you are King of Grace.

The King said: *"Whatever judgement or verdict Ayaaz will give, that will be our judgement, because you people have tried to defame him and his good name and honour. Therefore I shall not pass any judgement".*

He said further:

"O Ayaaz, please pass judgement on these evil-mongers
For you were innocent of their accusations and completely loyal.
O Ayaaz, from your test and trial numerous people are ashamed and full of grief".

Now listen to Ayaaz's good fortune, his annihilated self and his morals of love.

Ayaaz said:

"O King all sovereignty and rule is fitting for you,
It is your kindness that this honour Ayaaz enjoys
I am a mere slave. How can a star show its light in the presence of the Sun.
Whether its Venus, or Mercury or whether it is a shooting star
How can any of these show their existence in the presence of the Sun?"

The King, hearing this, became quite pleased. He replied:

"O Ayaaz, your high-mindedness has caused serfdom to be granted light

And your light has speedily moved from down here to the stars.
O Ayaaz, your bondage has reached that rank which is the envy of freedom
For you have done your duty to bondage and acquired the true life".

To this Ayaaz replied:

"This high-mindedness is your gift and the result of the blessings of your company.
Otherwise I am that slave of lowly rank who initially appeared before you in tattered clothes and leather jacket.
O You listener, Your tattered clothing is a clot of blood
And your leather jacket is the blood of menstruation.
Apart from that everything else you possess is a gift from Allah".

In this story Moulana Rumi (R.A.) is teaching the lesson of annihilation of the self. Ayaaz was granted many favours by the King. And in spite of that honour, in order to save himself from arrogance and pride, he used to go and see his tattered clothing and his old leather jacket and used to advise himself: *"O Ayaaz, this is your reality. Be not proud of your position of nearness to the King"*. In the same way the seekers after the Sufi path and the seekers after Allah should at all times keep their reality in front of their eyes.

They should remember their humble beginnings as Allah reminds us:

"We have created man from a clot". The origin of man is that he is created from the father's sperm and the mother's blood of menstruation. Apart from that all man's inner and outer gifts are bounties from Allah.

No matter what high rank Allah grants any man, the fact still remains that he is created from the sperm of his father and the menstrual blood of his mother. The mere thought of this should be a protection and salvation against arrogance. Man should at all times keep this thought in mind, that he was created in the womb of his mother. Then he was granted sight, hearing, reason and understanding. Who was the one who granted these gifts?

A certain saintly man was once crossing the road. He happened to accidently bumped against an arrogant, proud person. This was because the saintly man, due to his old age, was weak in eyesight.

The arrogant one proudly asked him: *"O blind one, can you not see? Do you not know who I am?"*

The saintly man replied: *"I know full well who you are. If you want, I shall explain to you who you are"*.

He said: *"All right, tell me"*.

The saintly man said: *"Life consists of three times: Past, present and future. As for the past, you are your father's unclean sperm mixed with the menstrual blood of your mother. As for the present, your abdomen contains faeces and is filled with urine. And as for the future, you will be a stinking rotten corpse that will be buried in the graveyard"*.

Pride and arrogance is quite common amongst foolish stupid ones. But if one just uses his reason, he will discover that arrogance is definitely not befitting for man. In the Hadith Qudsi Allah says: *"Pride is My Covering. And whosoever enters into it, I shall break his neck"*

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN UJUB AND TAKABBUR (SELF-CONCEIT AND ARROGANCE)

(By Hakim Akhtar Saheb)

Self-conceit (Ujub) means paying attention to any specific quality in oneself and instead of considering it a gift from Allah, to look upon it as a personal virtue. The effect of *'Ujub'* is this that instead of expressing gratitude and thanks to Allah Taala for that quality, one brags about oneself saying: *"I am like this or* *that"*. This is because he does not have his sights on the giver of the bounty and gifts i.e. Allah Taala. Hence in his heart he considers himself as worthy of praise.

Takabbur (pride) means to consider oneself greater in comparison with another person. Hence in the concept of takabbur a necessary element, is to consider others as being contemptible and lowly, whereas in *'Ujub'* it is not necessary that the person considers himself superior to another.

The relationship between one in whom there is self-conceit and one in whom there is pride is that every proud one has self-conceit in him, for when he admires his own qualities and considers himself better than someone else, then he is bound to consider another person as being despicable and low. But it is not necessary that every self-conceited one is also a proud person. Because a person may look at a special quality of his and consider himself great, while in the mind there is no thought of belittling another or considering that person inferior. This difference Allah has made this humble servant understand. All Praise to Allah for it. And in this there is no boasting.

Of the many diseases of the heart, both self-admiration (Ujub) and pride are deadly destructive diseases for the seekers of Allah Taala. They should never be negligent in treating these ailments. Let us understand the harm of these ailments by looking at the following example.

A lover has a great longing to meet his beloved. But at the time of meeting his beloved, he foolishly takes out a mirror from his pocket and instead of looking at his beloved, gets busy looking at himself, admiring his own form and beauty. Is this person not to be considered a hypocrite in his claim of love and is he not depriving himself?

Similarly, the seekers after the Sufi path should think that Allah is at all times directing His Grace and bounties towards His servants. Now if the servant, instead of directing himself towards

Allah Taala and His attributes, foolishly becomes engaged in admiring his own borrowed attributes (from Allah), then is this not hypocrisy in his claim of love for Allah Taala and is this not a sign of being deprived of good? You yourself can pass the judgement. You yourself may measure and gauge the amount of harm they cause.

From the above example, the harmful nature of both *'Ujub'* and *'Takabbur'* is clearly understood. The example is also a clear warning for all seekers after the Love of Allah.

"O Allah, protect us against the sickness of self-conceit, of pride and all other deadly spiritual and physical sicknesses." Ameen.

It is through the barakat of the company of my Sheikh that these examples and knowledge is granted to me.

All Praise to Allah! All Thanks to Allah! O Our Lord,
O Allah, grant us the ability to work righteous deeds
O You Helper of those seeking help, guide us.
There is no boasting over knowledge and riches.

THE STORY OF HIM WHO CONSIDERED HIMSELF FORCED

A certain person of incorrect belief claimed that man is a forced being and does not have a choice in any matter to do according to his will. Hence, he concluded that all his actions are due to his destiny being fixed and forced upon him; therefore he was not responsible and accountable for his actions.

One day this person entered an orchard and without the permission of the owner of the orchard, started picking fruit from the trees and ate it. The owner of the orchard came along and shouted at him: *"O you wicked thief! What are you doing?"*

He replied:
"This orchard belongs to Allah and I am a bondsman of His

I am eating of the gifts of Him, so what sin is in that?"

The owner of the orchard took hold of him, tied him to a tree with a rope and started to beat him over his back, with a thick stick.

The thief explained: *"O you unjust one, why do you persecute this innocent one in this evil manner? Have shame before Allah!"*

The owner of the orchard replied: *"This stick is Allah's and I am His slave, who is busy beating another. I have no choice. I am forced to beat you and so is my stick and remember everything done, is done by Allah Taala."*

The thief replied:
"I repent to Allah from this wrong belief of being forced.
There is no doubt a choice, there is a choice, there is a choice".

LESSON

A man came before Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه and asked: *"Is man forced or not?"* (Meaning does he have a choice in his actions or not).

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه told him: *"Lift up your one leg!"*

The man lifted his one leg up. Then he said: *"Now lift up the other".*

He asked: *"How can both legs be lifted up?"*

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه replied: *"Well, that is the answer to your question. Man is half forced and half free".*

We should continue to beg of Allah the ability and Divine guidance to do righteous deeds and beg Him to grant us proper understanding. The end result of some sins and the punishment, is that ones intelligence becomes defective. The punishment of becoming changed from human form to that of animals has been lifted from this Ummat, but the punishment of the reason becoming so affected that we behave like animals, still descends upon us.

May Allah bestow upon us correct understanding and the light of reason. May He protect us from the punishment of being changed in heart and reasoning to that of lower beings.

The experience of the saintly ones show that whosoever stays in the company of the saintly ones, performing Zikrullah punctually, is protected against punishment of a defect in reasoning and intelligence, causing one to behave worse than animals.

THE STORY OF A MAN WHO HAD A LION DRAWN ON HIS ARM

During the days of Ignorance the people had the habit of having pictures of lions and panthers tattooed upon their arms.

In this way one of them told a tatooist: *"Draw a lion on my arm"*. When the artist heated up the needle with which he was going to be making the tattoo, and placed it on his arm, he felt such pain that he shrieked, saying: *"What are you drawing?"*

The tatooist replied: *"I am drawing the tail of the lion"*.

He replied: *"But you can draw a lion without a tail"*.

The tatooist again heated the needle in the fire and then placed it upon his skin. Again he gave a loud cry, saying: *"What are you drawing now?"*

He replied: *"I am drawing the lion's ear"*.

He said: *"But a lion can be without ears also"*.

Once again, the drawer placed the needle in the fire to heat it and then placed it upon his skin. Again he gave a loud cry, saying: *"What are you drawing now?"*

He replied: *"I am drawing the stomach of the lion"*.

He said: *"Leave that out. Draw a lion without a stomach"*

Thereafter, he even refused the drawing of the lion's head.

Then the tatooist in anger and greatly irritated, threw down the needle and said:

"Get away from me!
Who has ever seen a lion without head, without tail and stomach,
Such a lion has never yet been created by God.
O You! when you are unable to bear the pain of a needle,
Then do not speak about tattooing such a lion on your arm.
O Brother, bear the harshness of the Ustad's or spiritual guide's training
So that you may find safety from the dictates of the self and be saved from blasphemy and iniquity.
If you desire to be enlightened and shining like the day ,
Then annihilate your 'self' like the night after day".

(In other words: If you reform the *'self'* through eliminating the evil dictates of the *'self'* at the hands of a spiritual guide, its darkness will disappear and you will discover that your life through the light of contact with Allah will become enlightened).

"Like the Saints; acquire freedom from your 'self'"
For after such spiritual efforts such nearness is achieved,
That the light of the Sun, Moon and Stars becomes a slave to the inner light.
O You listener, if you experience the splendour of Allah's nearness within yourself
The whole world will appear ugly and worthless before its noor"

LESSON

The drawing of pictures is prohibited in Islam, but here Moulana Rumi (R.A.) tells a story of the Days of Ignorance. In it he wishes to inform the seekers after the Sufi path, that if the Spiritual Guide, who is a follower of the Sunnat, should for the sake of their rectification resort to some harshness, then for every rebuke they should be tolerant and accept it with pleasure, so that through that rectification there may arise in them the doing of righteous deeds and praiseworthy morals and manners.

"If every rebuke of the Sheikh is going to cause you to grudge,
Then how can you become clean as a mirror without rubbing?"

These spiritual exercises and efforts are only for a limited number of days. Thereafter there will be comfort.

THE STORY OF THE SNAKE AND THE CITY OF BAGHDAD

A snake catcher once went to the mountains, which were covered with snow. Due to the snow and cold many very big snakes lay motionless as if they were dead.

"The snake-catcher saw a dead snake
In the extreme cold of winter.
He picked it up and took it to Baghdad,
With the purpose of using it for a show.
The snake like a pillar was long,
Which the snake-catcher dragged along to earn his livelihood.
The snake-catcher thought it was dead, while in fact it was alive.
Through the cold it appeared to be lifeless, but they knew not.
The snake-catcher told the spectators of the show: I have brought this snake to you; which I killed,
And in hunting it I spent extreme diligence and had to sweat blood."

Moulana Rumi says:

"He dragged the snake along to Baghdad, advertising it as he went along bragging about his bravery.
A large crowd gathered around as the news quickly spread.
That the snake-catcher had brought a very big snake,
A most rare thing, which is most astonishing.
Numerous inexperienced and stupid ones gathered
And all of them were caught in the net of the snake-catcher".

In the morning when the Sun rose in the sky and the Sun's rays heated the snake, the coldness of its body disappeared.

Gradually the signs of life came back into its body.

"The heat of the sun brought the signs of life into it
And the coldness departed from its organs.
Then the snake which was dead became alive
And started making movements.
The people, seeing the movements of the dead snake, were astonished
And these movements became for them a cause of great astonishment.
The spectators in astonishment shouted in a loud voice
And all of them fled in various directions".

When the snake began to move about like a fierce lion, many people fled so wildly that they struck against each other and became injured. The snake-catcher was himself petrified with fear.

From here Moulana Rumi (R.A.) starts to instruct saying: *"O You Seekers after the Sufi path, it may appear that the nafs, not being involved in sins, might appear to be dead. But one is never certain as to how it will react when left alone with a strange woman, or a beardless handsome young boy.*

"If the nafs like Fir-aun should find means of comfort and power,
Your nafs will like Fir-aun's become rebellious
And begin to commit sins and will begin to fight against callers towards truth".

LESSON

In this story Moulana Rumi (R.A.) gives a very important lesson for the Seekers after the Sufi path. He says: *"Never be completely sure about the state of your 'nafs"*. In its natural state it is inclined towards evil. Even if, through the company of a Sheikh and a long life of spiritual exercises and efforts the *"nafs"* appear to have changed towards good, still do not be at ease with it and become unmindful of it. Do not become negligent in taking precautions. Be not like some foolish Sufis, who had for a long time through the efforts of Zikr and other spiritual vigils seen their *'nafs'* having become accustomed to subjugation, so they started to be at ease and unmindful of its dangers, they started becoming involved with mixing with strange women and beardless handsome, young men. They thought that the desire to commit sins would not overpower them. Hence why should one not look upon those women and young men with clean looks. They did that and how tragic was their result? They became disgraced in a bad way. The *'nafs'* which appeared controlled and dead, became alive. And the looks which were supposed to be *"clean looks"* turned out to be dirty and prohibited looks.

In the end the snake of the *'nafs'* bit them and from the path of truth they were rejected and became disgraced. For this reason, our elders have stated that no matter how old the Muttaqi may be, one should up to his death not be negligent of precaution against the *nafs*. Hazrat Majzoob (R.A.) says:

"Have no trust in this nafs, O devout one!
Even if it becomes an angel, remain distrustful of it.
Look at the snake of your nafs
As soon as you are negligent here, it bites there".

A dog, no matter how trained it becomes, do not take the chain off its neck, or let it become slack. A trained dog will remain a dog. Do not remove the chain from its neck.

May Allah grant us the Divine Guidance to remain watchful over our *'nafs'* up to our last breath on earth.

TOWARDS FOLLOWING A SAINTLY SPIRITUAL GUIDE

"Allah's special servants - these saintly spiritual guides - are Allah's shadows on earth.
They are dead as far as connections with this world is concerned
And alive with regard to contact with Him.
Grab hold of the cloth of spiritual guide quickly and without hesitation

So that you may be saved from the calamities of the latter days.
Tread not this path of Sufism without a spiritual guide,
Be like Ibraheem who said: 'I love not those who pass away'
And be not attracted to others except Allah.
Go and through the tawassul of the shadow of Allàh on earth
Meet the Sun of Truth
And hold onto the cloth of Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.)".

(At this stage Moulana Rumi (R.A.), having turned towards the discussion on spiritual guide, his mind involuntarily went to his Sheikh Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) and now he mentions his name with great love).

"If you do not know the way to the enlightened and blessed gatherings of Shamsh Tabrezi,
Then ask Ziya-ul-Haq, Husamuddin to show you the way".

Ziya-ul-Haq is the nickname and Husamuddin (R.A.) is the name of Moulana Rumi's (R.A.) Khaleefa-i-A'zam. Initially he acquired spiritual benefit from Shamsh Tabrezi (R.A.) and later became attached to Moulana Rumi (R.A.) from whom he derived much spiritual benefit.

"And if along the way in search of a Murshid, jealousy should come between you and your aim And jealousy begins to squeeze your throat,
Then remember that in the field of jealousy Iblees has made more progress than you".

It is possible that Moulana Rumi (R.A.) might have mentioned this thought in the gatherings of his Mureeds. Hence, there was the danger that someone from among them might have felt jealous of the position of Moulana Husamuddin (R.A.). This is so because generally jealousy is the one thing that prevents people from going to the people of knowledge and to the saintly ones. Hence, after this Moulana Rumi (R.A.) turns towards a discussion on jealousy.

"It was because of jealousy that Iblees could not stand in respect

before Hazrat Adam (A.S.),
And it was through jealousy that he opposed righteousness.
It is because of jealousy that houses are destroyed and ruined
And through it a royal falcon inspite of its qualities becomes an ordinary crow.
Become like the dust under the feet of the men of truth
And cast dust on the head of jealousy as we have done".

We thank Allah that through the blessings of His Mercy, the first part of this book has been completed.

Allah! Through Your Mercy and through the blessings of Your Noble Nabi ﷺ, accept this effort and grant the writer hereof and the readers thereof the Divine Guidance to act upon it, Ameen.

And May Allah's choicest blessings descend upon the best of His Creation, Muhammad ﷺ and upon His family and his companions, the members of his household. O Most Merciful One.

Muhammad Akhtar

Thursday, 12 Rajab 1392

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